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THE UNPOPULAR KING:

The Life and Times of Richard III.

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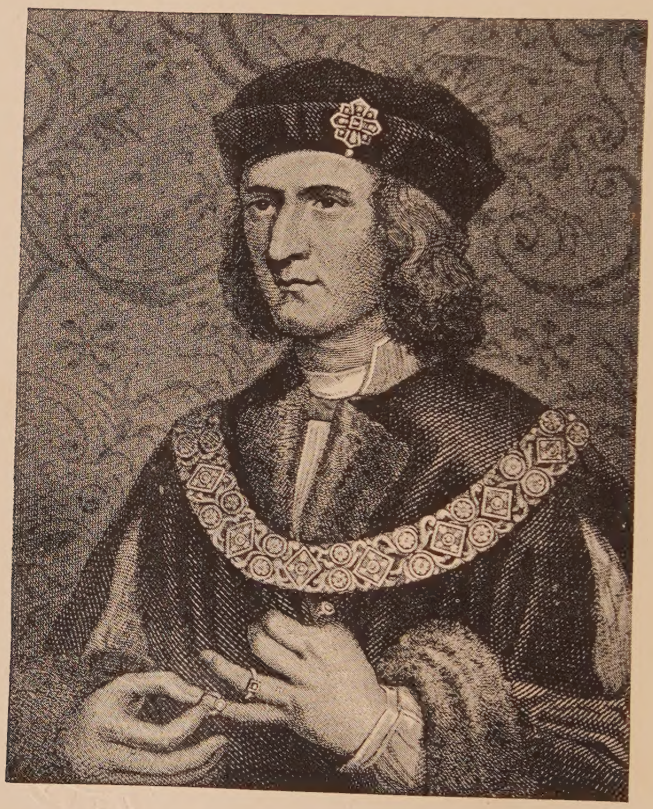

RICHARD III.
(From a Picture at Kensington.)

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THE UNPOPULAR KING:

The Life and Times of Richard III.

BY

ALFRED O. LEGGE, F.C.H.S.,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF PIUS IX.," "THE TEMPORAL POWER OF THE PAPACY," "A LIFE OF CONSECRATION," ETC.

"And if by chaunce thou light of some speache that seemeth dark, consider of it with judgment, before thou condemne the worke; for in many places he is driven both to praise and blame with one breath, which in readinge will seeme hard, and in action appeare plaine."—*Promos and Cassandra.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

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THE UNPOPULAR KING.

CHAPTER I.

The problem of governing Ireland presented difficulties in the latter part of the fifteenth century, as perplexing as those with which we are confronted in the nineteenth. For obvious reasons the solution of those difficulties cannot be discussed here. The all but universal aspiration of the Irish people for some form of national Parliament has been intensified by the misgovernment of half a millennium. Its concession, absolute and without restriction, to the extent of creating elective County Boards, charged with the administration of those local affairs which do not trench upon matters of Imperial concern, is demanded by every principle of political morality, and is the condition of the maintenance of the Union.

Nothing was further from the purpose of Richard III. than to make such concessions. On the contrary he considered it necessary, in order to the preservation of the corporate unity, that the ideas of England should be stereotyped on Ireland, and he explains the grounds of his appointment of the Earl of Kildare as Lord Deputy, in words

which must have aroused the ire of that young chieftain, "whose manifest aim was independence of the English Crown." * "The cause," he says "is why that the King woll alwey be at his libertie, to thentent the relief of that lande by his immediate auctorite, whensoever he may have furst leiser thereunto."

The firm but conciliatory spirit in which the King grappled with the Irish difficulty secured peace in his time. But his policy was to hold Ireland by right of conquest. The patriotic Kildare was thus driven to identify himself with the native Irish, and a legacy of trouble was bequeathed to Richard's successor.† The Duke of York had resided upon his large estates in Ireland, had acquired the respect of the people and their attachment to his House. But during the reign of Edward IV., the father of the present Earl of Kildare had defied the authority of the Crown and summoned Parliaments at Drogheda and elsewhere, in spite of the King's explicit prohibition. He, however, made his peace with the King, obtained a reversal of his attainder, and was appointed Lord Justice, or Deputy, an office in which his son succeeded him.‡ Richard confirmed the succession of the young Earl, of whose influence he designed to make use in more ways than one.

William Lacy was commissioned to lay before the Earl of Kildare and his Council the royal will for the government of Ireland. In his instructions § we read, "the said Maister

* "History of the Irish People," by Rev. W. A. O'Conor, vol. i., p. 228.

† *Ibid.*, p. 229 sq. This remarkable and fascinating book is one which every student of Irish history should consult.

‡ "Compendium of Irish History," by Alfred Webb, p. 182.

§ "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 43.

William shall shewe that the King after the stablisshing of this his realme of England, principally afore other thinges entendeth for the weele of this lande of Irland to set and advise suche good rule and politique guyding there as any of his noble progenitors have done or entended in tymes past to reduce it." He is to notify the appointment of "the righte highe and mighti Prince Edward, his first begoten son," to the Lieutenancy of Ireland, with the Earl of Kildare as Deputy-Lieutenant. The latter nomination is made "in consideracion of the good fame and noble disposicion that Thomas Fitzgerard Erle of Kildare is reported to be of, and namely for that he hath endevoired him self by his noble corage wele and feithfully to occupie as Lieutenant to Richard late Duc of York, the King hath ordeyned the said Thomas Fitzgerard to be deputie of said mighti Prince Edward, now Lieutenant during the Kinge's said pleasure."

In this appointment Richard had his personal interests in view. The great O'Neil was the Earl of Kildare's brother-in-law. By his influence and that of O'Donnell, the King hoped to recover his inheritance in the Earldom of Ulster. To this end a royal message was sent to Kildare by the Bishop of Armaghdown on the 22nd of September:

"Furst, he shalle shew unto the said Erle that the specialle and singular cause of his message at this tyme is to endevor him to accomplisshe the Kinges gret desire forto enduce by alle meanes possible suche persones as deteigne and kepe from his grace his right and enheritaunce of his erldom of Wostre, and that it may be ordeyned and brought to the Kinges handes and possession, as it hathe been in late dayes of his progenitors. Wherein the King said grace

thinketh and perfitely understandeth that no man can do more than his said cousyn, seeing and considered that the gret Onealle that hath maried the said erles sustre hathe and occupieth most part thereof; whome the Kinges grace for the cause of that mariage and the love of his said cousyn, wolle be the rather applied to accept into his favor, as his brother late King of England before had his fader, and gave unto him his lyvree."*

At the same time conciliatory messages were sent to the Earl of Desmond whose father, after being raised to the rank of Viceroy, by Edward IV., had been disgraced and beheaded.

The Earl is assured of the King's recognition "of the manifold benivolent services and kindnenesse by our cousin your fader in sundri wise to the famous prince of noble memorie our fader," that the King always had "and hathe inward compassion of the dethe of his said fader," and would permit him by legal means to procure the punishment of those who were responsible for it. And further, the King forbids him to marry without his consent, promising with all celerity to secure for him an eligible marriage "in suche wise and of such noble blode as shalle redounde to his weele and honnor, and of alle of his frendes and kynnesmen." In return for these favours, Desmond is required to take the oath of allegiance to Richard III. and "to renounce the wering and usage of the Irisshe arraye, and from thensfurthe to geve and applie him self to use the maner of thapparelle for his persone after the Englisshe guyse." †

In a letter to his Counsellor, the Bishop of Enachden, "to

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 71.
† *Ibid.*, vol. i., pp. 68, 73, 74.

be shewn on his behalf to his cousin the Earl of Desmond," Richard promises, with a view of ensuring compliance with his demands, that he will henceforth send him "as wele of gownes, doublettes, hosen, and bonettes and soo followingly in tyme comyng, as the caas or chaunge of the said fasshion shall require." * The Bishop is further "to deliver unto his said cousyn in most convenient place and honourable presence the Kinges lyvree, that is to wite a coler of gold of his device, and other apparell forsaid for his persune." But "above all other things," he must obtain from the Earl guarantees that the Church shall not be wronged, "neither in liberties, fraunchises, grauntes, custumes, or any other spirituell emolumentes belonging to the same." He is to secure the impartial administration of the law, and "by all weys and meanes of pollycie see and provide that by the passage of the commune high wayes there, the Kinges subjiettes may be assured to goo and passe without robbing and unlawful letting." †

These attempts to enforce habits foreign to the wishes of the people, met with no better success than they deserved. Their temporary success, owing to the strong hand which imposed them, and to the attachment of the Irish people to the House of York, served but to create a new grievance in the minds of a generous but sensitive people.

Many other conciliatory letters were addressed to nobles and gentlemen of influence in Ireland. Some of these were not directed, but entrusted to the Bishop of Armaghdown to be used at his discretion. Richard's reign was of too short duration to test the effect of his policy in Ireland. After the

* Harl. MSS., codex 433, art. 2296.
† Ellis' "Original Letters," 2nd Series, vol. i., p. 124.

death of his son, the Earl of Lincoln was appointed Lord Lieutenant, and the tranquillity which prevailed at a time when Ireland might well have been a source of much embarrassment must be attributed to the confidence which the King had the wisdom to repose in the Earl of Kildare. The loyalty of the Irish people to the House of York even survived its legitimate representatives. Richard left a natural son bearing his own name, and long after his father's death the Irish of the west and south sought to make him their chief, "being strongly affected to any of the House of Yorke were they legitimate, or naturall, for Richard Duke of Yorkes sake, sometimes their viceroy." *

At once beloved and feared, admired and mistrusted, Richard had a thorny path marked out for him; one in which the subtlety of his intellect must prove a blind guide if divorced from sternest virtue. No individual who had served him faithfully failed to receive rewards proportioned to his rank and service, and he disclosed to no one those suspicions of coming trouble which it is perfectly evident he already entertained.†

If there was one man in the kingdom upon whose loyalty Richard should have been able to rely without misgiving, that man was the Duke of Buckingham, who, says Buck, "he had reason to suppose nearest to his trust." He had been the original fomenter of his ambition, a participator in, or the instigator of every crime laid to Richard's charge. With lavish hands he had been enriched with emoluments and offices innumerable, justifying his own boast that he had as many

* Sir George Buck, p. 105. † See Fabyan, p. 516.

liveries and Stafford knots as Warwick had possessed of ragged staves. The whole of Wales and the bordering counties, with large parts of Derbyshire and Yorkshire, were completely at his command. He had been created Lord Chamberlain, and confirmed in his hereditary office of High Constable of England, with precedence of every subject except princes of the blood.* So great was Richard's confidence in his loyalty that he had entrusted to his custody his most dangerous enemy, Morton, Bishop of Ely. Nothing could more conclusively prove how erroneous is the statement of More that, even after Richard's coronation, he and the Duke "lived in such hatred and distrust of each other that the Duke verily looked to have been murdered at Gloucester; from which natheless he in fair manner departed." † Yet his greed was not satisfied. He had inherited a moiety of the lands of his ancestor, Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford; the other half had been claimed by Henry V. in right of his mother, Mary Bohun. The issue of Mary became extinct by the death of Henry VI., when the entire estate should have reverted back to the heirs of Ann, eldest daughter of Humphrey Bohun and grandmother of the Duke of Buckingham. The Duke's claim, therefore, appears to have been legitimate. On the other hand Richard may well have reasoned that although he could not inherit the private property of a former king, yet considerations of State policy justified his rejection of Buckingham's claims. The Duke was already Constable of

* An entire folio page in Sir George Buck's History is occupied with the enumeration of the offices and honours conferred upon Buckingham by the Duke of Gloucester. See Buck, in Kennett, p. 531.

† More, in Kennett, p. 136.

all the royal castles and lands in Herefordshire; his territorial influence throughout the country was enormous; this concession, which Edward IV. had refused to grant, although the Duke was his wife's brother-in-law, would render that influence perilous. He therefore put off his powerful subject with promises; nay, he went so far as to make the desired grant under his own sign manual, "till the same shall be vested in him by the next Parliament, as fully as if no Act of Parliament had been made against King Henry VI." *

Buckingham was well aware that such a grant was valueless so long as Letters Patent under the Great Seal were withheld; and, according to More, he accused the King to Morton of unnecessarily delaying this concession, which was the fullest grant the Crown could give without the sanction of Parliament. The King's reluctance would offend Buckingham as much as a refusal, and he was probably justified in doubting the sincerity of Richard's promise eventually to complete the grant.† The Plantagenets had not been given to assemble Parliaments unnecessarily. Who could say when the Parliament would meet that should give validity to the King's grant; or whether the King himself, no longer in need of the Duke's support, might not persuade a subservient Parliament to refuse to ratify his own provisional favour?

* Harl. MSS. 433, f. 107. It is obvious, however, that this signed Bill of the King had no binding power upon Parliament, and might be revoked at will.

† Miss Halsted says (vol. ii., p. 235) that this generally reported cause of the Duke's rebellion "is evidently devoid of truth, as shown by instruments that effectually disprove the allegation." But a signed Bill granted by the King was only a *means* of obtaining Letters Patent under the Great Seal. The fact that this Bill *remained in the Stafford archives*, whence it was printed by Douglas, itself proves that the grant was never made, as in that case the signed Bill would have been delivered up to the Lord Chancellor. Moreover, there is no record of the grant in the Patent Rolls. See Gairdner, p. 136.

Wearied with the Duke's importunities, Richard is said to have angrily reminded him that the Earldom of Hereford was the inheritance of Henry IV., who was also King of England. "Will you, my lord of Buckingham," he demanded, "claim to be heir of Henry IV.? You may then also, haply, assume his spirits and lay claim to the crown by the same titles." * In this rebuff the King betrayed his discovery of the true cause of Buckingham's disloyalty, and it was resented with a bitterness intensified by the breach of an alleged promise of Richard to unite his son Edward with Buckingham's daughter, the Lady Anne Stafford. Baulked of what he considered his just claims, the Duke began to consider by what means he could thrust out the ungrateful King. His latent ambition, fired by a thirst for revenge, now led him to aspire even to the throne. "The truth is," says More, "the Duke of Buckingham was a high-spirited man and envied the glory of another so much, that when he saw the crown set upon King Richard's head he could not endure the sight, and turned his head away." †

We have already seen that Buckingham was of the blood royal. Mr. Gairdner is of opinion that he was in possession of a family secret, unknown to Richard, which gave him a double title to the crown through John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, eldest and illegitimate son of John of Gaunt. An Act of Richard II. legitimating the family of Beaufort, had been confirmed by Henry IV., who, however, surreptitiously tampered with the Act, making it exclude their succession to the throne. But the Duke of Buckingham was in possession of the original

* Buck, p. 35. Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 193.
† More's Works, p. 70.

Act of Parliament, conferring an unqualified legitimacy upon John Beaufort, and no act of Henry IV. could legally interfere with the rights so created. The Crown had possessed this power up to the time of Edward III., when the Commons, incensed with its abuse, demanded that when once the royal assent had been given to petitions they should be turned *without change* into statutes of the realm, and derive force of law from their entry on the rolls of Parliament.*

The Duke's cousin, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, alone had a prior claim to the Lancastrian succession. If we may credit Sir George Buck, he had already sought to strengthen that claim by petitioning the King "to bestow on him any of King Edward the Fourth his daughters." There can be little doubt, however, that Buck is here mistaken, and that the only negotiation of this nature was that to which we must presently refer between Margaret, Countess of Richmond (and now of Derby), and the Duke of Buckingham. For one of the first acts of Richard, after his coronation, had been a renewal of the treaty with the Duke of Brittany, a principal object of which was to ensure the continued detainment of the Earl of Richmond. The instructions to Sir Thomas Hutton, his envoy for this purpose, contain a clause which can only be understood as indicating a knowledge on the part of Richard that the enemies of his house centred their hopes in the Earl, and were in communication with him. "He shall seek and understand the mind and disposition of the duke anent Sir Edward Wydville and his retinue, practising by all means to him possible to unsearch

* See Green's "History of the English People," vol. i., p. 461.

and know if there be intended any enterprise out of land upon any part of this realm." *

There had been one notable exception to the general amnesty with which Richard had signalised his coronation. In Morton he knew that he had an irreconcilable enemy. This much at least was certain, that Morton would be no party to what he might regard as injustice to the children of his friend and benefactor Edward IV. His sympathies, as Richard well knew, were Lancastrian. The transfer of his allegiance had not been to the House of York, but to the person of Edward, whose widow herself was of a Lancastrian family. He was as dangerous to the King as Hastings had been, and it was necessary to render him powerless for mischief. He was therefore left in the custody of Buckingham at Brecknock Castle, where he employed his enforced leisure in maturing plans for the overthrow of the "Usurper," by uniting the two Houses of York and Lancaster. He was probably aware of Buckingham's dissatisfaction, and waited his opportunity for converting it into revenge.

Morton had been attainted by Edward IV. after the battle of Towton, when he fled with Queen Margaret. The battle of Tewkesbury and the death of Henry VI., left Edward without a rival on the throne, and his severity to the vanquished was tempered by the reversal of the attainder of some of the less prominent partisans of the Red Rose, amongst others that of Morton, who was received into the King's favour. Preferments were heaped upon him in rapid succes-

* Harl. MSS., 433, f. 241.

sion until, in 1429, he became Bishop of Ely. A man of low birth, he was avaricious and steeped in ambition. He had, indeed, a reputation for piety, but it was of the type which his origin would suggest—superstitious and self-contained. After his elevation to his episcopal throne he held no prominent position in the State during the remainder of Edward's reign. He passed much of his time in his town residence, called the "Bell," in Holborn, the extensive gardens attached to which have been immortalised by Shakspeare. Here he occupied his leisure "in laying in those stores of learning and of thought which, at a future period, enabled him to become one of the most prominent statesmen of our country."* Edward's confidence in him was shown by the fact that he appointed him one of the executors of his will; the Bishop's discretion was equally shown by his refusing to act.

The Duke of Buckingham had accompanied Richard in his progress as far as Gloucester, where he took his leave "in most loving and trusty manner." He proceeded to Tewkesbury, where he remained for two days, amid scenes suggestive of those surprises which the Wheel of Fortune brings to the man who waits. "I saw my chance," he is reported to have said, "as perfectly as I saw my own image in a glass, and in this point I rested in imagination secretly with myself two days at Tewkesbury."†

It is important to observe that we know, from the only two reliable contemporary authorities, that *the Princes were at this time in custody in the Tower.* "In the meantime," writes

* Dean Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops," vol. vi., p. 416.
† Grafton, p. 156.

the continuator of the Croyland Chronicle, "and *while these things were still going on* (alluding to Richard's visit to York) the two sons of King Edward remained in the Tower of London, in the custody of certain persons appointed for that purpose."* Fabyan adds that conspiracies were forming in London for their release."

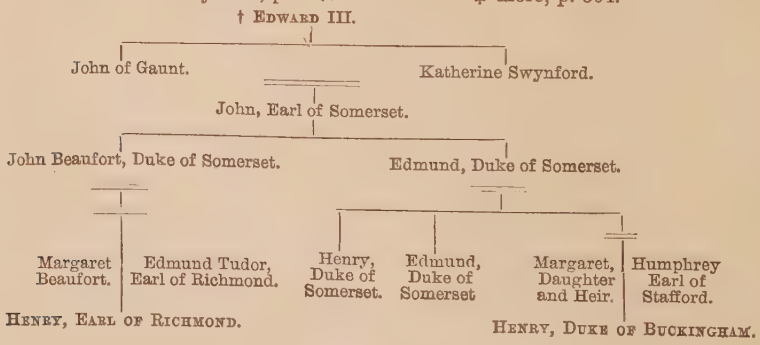
Buckingham brooded over his ambitious designs. He resolved to take counsel with his distinguished and subtle-minded prisoner at Brecknock. Between Worcester and Bridgenorth he chanced to fall in with his sister-in-law, Margaret Beaufort, now the wife of Lord Stanley. His conferences with this lady would naturally and almost inevitably suggest the insuperable difficulties which stood in the way of his vaulting ambition. For her son, Henry, Earl of Richmond, was the representative of the elder branch of the House of Lancaster; if, therefore, Richard were got rid of, the Houses of York and Lancaster had each representatives in the direct line. Margaret at all events gave a death-blow to the Duke's hopes by urging him to use his influence with the King to bring about the return of her son, and to strengthen his title by allying him to one of the daughters of Edward IV. The Duke determined to take counsel with Morton before committing himself, but secretly resolved to gratify Margaret's wish, though not through the instrumentality of Richard III.

Henry, only son of Edmund Tudor and Margaret Beaufort, had been an object of jealousy to the House of York, owing to the alleged prognostication of his future greatness by Henry

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 490.

VI., to which we have already referred. "One day," says Bacon, "when King Henry VI., whose innocency gave him holiness, was washing his hands at a great feast, he cast his eye upon Richmond, then a young youth, and exclaimed: 'This is the lad who shall possess quietly that we now strive for.'"* The descent of the Earl of Richmond and the Duke of Buckingham from Edward III. is shown below.† However flimsy his claim to the throne at this time, it is perfectly clear that Henry was the next heir *of the House of Lancaster,* and equally impossible to believe that the Duke of Buckingham could have been ignorant of his pretensions. This is but one of many facts which discredit More's narrative, in which he represents the Duke as saying: "I thought if I would take the sovereignty on myself, now was the time, but as I travelled homeward between Worcester and Bridgenorth I met the Lady Margaret, who is the rightful and sole heir of John, Duke of Somerset, my grandfather's elder brother, *whose title I had forgot,* till I saw her in my way, and then I remembered that both her claim and her son the Earl of Richmond's were bars to mine, and forbad my pretending to the imperial crown of England." ‡

* Henry VII., p. 247. ‡ More, p. 504.



I dismiss, as either unworthy of credence or as incriminating himself, the story that Buckingham was already aware of the murder of the Princes.* It is certain that he would not have adopted Margaret's plans on a vague *report* of their death. The story was invented to give the garb of virtue to sedition, and of truth to the malevolent report which the Croyland chronicler appears to trace to the Duke himself. But it is worthy of note that this statement by the continuator of More's work completely demolishes the basis of history, and proves Tyrell's alleged confession to be a myth.

There was a widespread feeling of indignation at the continued confinement of the Princes. The people, especially of the southern and western parts of the kingdom, began to murmur, and to inquire what had become of them, and confederacies were formed for their liberation.† If the Duke of Buckingham had been aware of their disappearance—working as he now was for the overthrow of Richard—he would not have failed to spread the tidings during the King's absence in the north. The narrative of his conversations with Morton is given at length by Sir Thomas More. Unreliable as is his history, we are always sure of More's honesty of purpose; ‡ and as these conversations were related to him by Morton, they may be accepted, with some reservation, as substantially

* Buckingham left Richard at Gloucester. It was some days later, at Warwick, according to More, that Richard despatched Tyrell upon his inhuman errand. Yet Buckingham is represented as saying to Morton: "When I was certainly informed of the death of the two innocent Princes, to which (God be our judge) I never consented, my blood curdled at his treason and barbarity. I *abhorred the sight of him*, and his company much more, and, pretending an excuse to leave the Court, retired to Brecknock."—More, p. 504.

† "Croyland Chronicle," p. 490.

‡ That is if we have to do with More in this matter. I assume in the text his authorship of the life of Richard III. attributed to him—a question which has been discussed in the Preface.

accurate. It should be remembered, however, that it is not to More, but to Holinshed and Hall, who completed his fragment, that we owe the story of Buckingham's cognizance at this time of the murder of the Princes. The following is a summary of these conversations as given by Hall, who is in substantial agreement with More.

The Duke had spoken highly of King Richard, when Morton, perceiving his leanings* "craftily sought the ways to prick him forward . . . keeping himself close within his bandes that he rather seemed to follow him than to lead him." He therefore replied: "Surely, my lord, the folly it were for me to lie, for I am sure if I should swear the contrary, you would not once believe me. But if the world would have gone as I would have wished, that King Henry's son had had the crown, and not King Edward, then would I have been his true and faithful subject." God, he said, had ordained otherwise, his duty was submission. "And as for the late Protector, and now King——" He stopped abruptly, observing that he had already said too much. "Then longed the Duke sore to hear what he would have said, because he ended with 'the King' and then so suddenly stopped." He urged the Bishop to confide his secret thoughts to him, "of which there could come no harm, perhaps more good than he supposed;" and he protested that his only reason for asking the King to commit him to his custody was that he might profit by his secret advice and counsel. The Bishop objected that it was dangerous to talk of kings; words true and honest might be

* The Bishop but touched the pulse of the Duke, says Buck, "and knew how the distemper lay, which he irritated into such sparklings as gave him notice where his constitution was most apt and prepared."

otherwise construed by a prince. He often thought of the tale—"When the lion had proclaimed that on pain of death no horned beast should come into the wood, one beast that had a bouche of flesh growing out of his head fled at a great pace. The fox inquired whither he fled? 'In faith,' quoth he, 'I neither know nor care, so I were once hence, because of the proclamation against horned beasts.' 'What fool!' quoth the fox, 'the lion never meant it for thee, for that which thou hast is no horn in thy head.' 'No, marry,' replied the beast, 'I know that well enough; but *if he say it is a horn*, where am I then?'"

The Duke laughed at the Bishop's story, promised his protection, and persuaded Morton to finish his broken sentence. As Richard was King in possession, he continued, he did not dispute his title; but, as he had such good abilities, he wished he had some other excellent virtues, "as our Lord hath planted in the person of your grace," and there he broke off again. The Duke was irritated, and complained that he could not certainly know the Bishop's leanings. It was otherwise with the wily Bishop, who had taken the measure of his companion. The Duke's love of praise, the intensity of his hatred of the King, and his disposition to strike for the crown, had been carefully noted. And now, with the promise of strictest secrecy, Morton determined to speak plainly, "intending thereby to compass how to destroy and utterly confound King Richard, and to deprive him of his royal dignity, or else to set the Duke so a-fire with the desire of ambition that he himself might be safe and escape out of all danger and peril." He had, he said, reflected much during his incarceration upon the condition of the

country; "what governor we now have, and what ruler we might have. . . . When I behold your noble personage, your justice and indifference, your fervent zeal and ardent love towards your natural country, and in like manner that love of your country towards you, the great learning, pregnant wit, and goodly eloquence which so much doth abound in the person of your grace . . . I must needs think this realm fortunate which has such a prince in store. . . . On the other hand when I call to memory the good qualities of the late Protector, now called King, so violated and subverted by tyranny, so changed and altered by usurped authority, so clouded and shadowed by blind and insatiable ambition . . . I must needs say that he is neither meet to be a king of so noble a realm, nor so famous a realm meet to be governed by such a tyrant." After enumerating Richard's crimes, *including the murder of the Princes,** he continued: "And now, my lord, ... I say and affirm, if you love your lineage or your native country, you must yourself take upon you the crown."

The Duke sighed, but remained silent. The Bishop was uncomfortable, and was now as anxious to know the Duke's mind as the Duke had been to dive into his secret thoughts. "Be not afraid, my lord," he said, "all promises shall be kept," and so Morton departed for the night. The conference was resumed on the following day, when Buckingham returned confidence for confidence. He explained his having taken

* "Did he not accuse his own mother of adultery? . . . Did he not declare his two brothers and his two nephews bastards? and, what is still more barbarous, *did he not cause these two poor innocent Princes, whose blood cries aloud for vengeance, to be cruelly murdered?* My heart revolts when I *think of their untimely fate,* and my soul with horror remembers this bloody butchery, this inhuman monster."—HALL, p. 503.

part with the Duke of Gloucester by quoting an old proverb, "Ruithe the realme where children rule and women govern." He speaks of the King as one "whom I assure you I thought to be as clean without dissimulation, as tractable without injury, as merciful without cruelty, as now I know him perfectly to be a dissembler without verity, a tyrant without pity. . . . And so, by my means at the first council held in London, when he was most suspected of that thing that after happened, he was made Protector and Defender both of the King and of the realm." After recapitulating and censuring the King's public acts, and declaring that he had been deluded by the alleged proofs of illegitimacy, the Duke mentions his own personal grievance. When he sued to him for the Hereford estates and the High Constableship of England, "he did not only first delay me, and afterwards deny me, but gave me such unkind words, with such taunts and re-taunts . . . as though I had never furthered him, but hindered him, as though I had put him down and not set him up; yet all these ingratitudes and undeserved unkindnesses I bare closely . . . outwardly dissembling what I inwardly thought, and so with a painted countenance I passed the last summer in his last company." He left the King, he says, "with a merry countenance and a spiteful heart."

There is evidently much that is apocryphal in Hall's report of these conversations. He himself attributes Buckingham's reflections upon the King to "the inward hate" he bore him, and quaintly adds that whatever the Duke intended "he was rounded shorter by the whole head without attainder and judgment." *

* Hall's "Chronicle of English History," pp. 383–90.

Morton was a man who towered head and shoulders above the ecclesiastics and politicians of his time; a man well versed in affairs, and able to penetrate the veneer of simulation in which all politicians were encased. But he was Buckingham's prisoner. The man of power needed as much as he was needed by the man of brains, and Morton knew that the game was in his hands. Whether the Duke should elect to strike for the crown for himself, or for his cousin, the Earl of Richmond, was for the moment a matter of indifference to him. In either case he would regain his liberty, and a less subtle intellect than his could marshal sophistries enough to demonstrate the "divine right" of the successful usurper. But the Duke was in no haste to liberate his prisoner; "he gave the Bishop fair words, saying that he should shortly depart, and that well accompanied for fear of enemies." *

In his conference with Margaret Beaufort, the Duke had already acquiesced in her project for the marriage of her son Henry Tudor with Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Edward IV. "I doubt not," he remarked to Morton, "but the bragging boar which, with his tusks,† raises every man's skin, shall not only be brought to confusion as he hath deceived, but that this empire shall ever be certain of an indisputable heir." Morton had probably already planned this scheme for uniting the two Houses of York and Lancaster, and the Duke found

* Hall, p. 390.

† The allusion is to Richard's cognizance, an emblematical device not to be confounded with the coat of arms, or even the crest. The very name of Plantagenet was derived from the cognizance of the progenitor of that line of kings; the yellow broom (*Planta-genista*) having been the symbol, suggestive of humility, which he adopted when performing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Richard's cognizance was a silver boar, with tusks and bristles of gold, and bearing the legend *Ex honore de Windsor.*

in him a willing coadjutor. A trusty messenger was required to conduct the delicate negotiation with the widow of Edward IV., and such an one Morton was ready to produce. He had, he said "an old friend, discreet, sober, and well-witted, called Reginald Bray, whose prudent policy he had known to have compassed things of great importance." * Reginald Bray was a trusted agent of the Countess of Richmond, as he had been of her father's. He seems to have been a man of some consequence, his father having been a member of Henry VI.'s Privy Council. That he had been long in the confidence of the Countess appears from the fact of his having received a legacy from her second husband, whilst he had been associated with Morton as a trustee of her third marriage settlement.† But Bray was in Lancashire with the Countess and Lord Stanley, and before his arrival at Brecknock, Morton had regained his liberty. "The Bishop," says Hall, "being as witty as the Duke was wily, did not tarry till the Duke's company was assembled, but secretly disguised in a night departed (to the Duke's great displeasure), and came to his See of Ely, where he found money and friends, and so sailed into Flanders." ‡

Margaret was meanwhile actively planning the accomplishment of the scheme in which she had solicited Buckingham's assistance. Her physician, Dr. Lewis, a Welshman, "a grave man and of no small experience," was also physician to Queen Elizabeth. To him Margaret confided her plans, observing that "the time was now come when as King Edward's eldest

* Grafton, part ii., p. 129.
† "Life of Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby," by C. H. Cooper
‡ Hall's "Chronicle," p. 390.

daughter might be given in marriage to her son Henry." Dr. Lewis appreciating the importance thus thrust upon him, "nothing lingering, spake with the Queen as yet remaining in sanctuary, and declared the matter not as delivered to him in charge, but as devised of his own head."* Holinshed says that this project was as far from the Qeeen's thought, "as the man that the rude people say is in the moon." But, he adds, when it was suggested to her, "Lord, how her spirits revived, and how her heart leapt in her body for joy and gladness!"† She entered willingly into a project for removing the Princess in disguise, and transporting her with her sisters to the Low Countries, provided that the Earl of Richmond would solemnly swear "to espouse and take to wife the Lady Elizabeth or else the Lady Cecily, if her elder sister should not be living."‡ The vigilance of Richard prevented the execution of these plans. When the report of the Queen's intentions got abroad, the King appointed John Nesfield, Esquire, to guard the sanctuary at Westminster and all the neighbouring parts, which at once assumed the appearance of a besieged castle and fortress.§

The Countess of Richmond removed to London and took up her residence at Stanley House, for the purpose of frequent communication with Queen Elizabeth. This was effected through the instrumentality of Dr. Lewis, whose professional reputation enabled him to pass without suspicion the guards of the vigilant John Nesfield. No time was lost in communicating to the Earl of Richmond this favourable change in his prospects. Hugh Conway, a gentleman in the

Polydore Vergil, Book xxv.
Grafton, p. 166.

† Holinshed, p. 414.
§ "Croyland Chronicle," p. 491.

confidence of the Duke of Buckingham, was despatched to Brittany, the bearer both of money and advice.

Under the organising hand of Buckingham the movement in the south and west for the liberation of the Princes was converted into a conspiracy. *No mention is made of any report of their death,* and the conspiracy had little unity of aim, whilst the attitude of Lord Stanley was doubtful. The rescue of the Princes, however, was put in the foreground as appealing to general sympathy. Their mysterious confinement had given rise to various rumours, and by the least suspicious their liberation was earnestly desired. Archbishop Bourchier was questioned, and he was urgent in pressing upon Richard a claim for some assurance of their safety,* for he had pledged his honour to the Queen for the safety of her sons. It is not clear what communications passed between the Cardinal and the King. The only satisfactory response to the demands of Bourchier would have been the production of the royal children. This at all events was not done. The probability is that Richard was unable to give the required information, and unwilling to confess his ignorance. The Archbishop was old, and, if not satisfied with such explanations as the King may have given, he had no reason to distrust him, and was content to leave investigation to others. The rising anger of the people at the King's silence, of which Bourchier cannot have been ignorant, should exonerate the aged and infirm Primate from the charge of pusillanimity. And if, as Dean Hook affirms, his friends kept from him all agitating details, he knew the character of the King, the watchfulness of his

* Hook's "Archbishops," vol. v., p. 381.

enemies, the strong emotional sentiment of the country; and he knew that the question, "Where are your brother's children?" would be brought home to Richard far more powerfully by others than by himself. It must also be remembered that he was intimate with Morton, and was possibly aware of plots in which his own family were deeply concerned, and which would have given a colour of self-interest to any attempt on his part to cause embarrassment to the King.

Meetings, which had been held privately to consider the means by which the liberation of the Princes might be accomplished, soon became more open; and the purpose of restoring Edward V. to the throne was avowed. These proceedings occurred after Richard had left Warwick, and therefore subsequently to the date at which, according to More, the Duke of Buckingham had been informed of the murder of the Princes. The public anxiety was stimulated by painful rumours which seemed to acquire confirmation from the persistent silence of the King. A few days later, it was reported that the Princes had been removed; then that they had died; that they had been foully murdered; that Richard himself was the assassin. Incredulity, amazement, horror, alternately swayed the minds of an outraged people. But as day after day passed, and rumour, many-mouthed but without consistency, became increasingly vague, the crime was felt to be too unnatural, too demoniacal for credence, and the belief gained ground that the plots for the deliverance of the seven children of Edward IV. had been revealed to Richard, who, for their greater safety, had sent the two Princes abroad. And, indeed, there is reason to believe that

Richard was aware of the conspiracy before he left York, and was taking measures to ensure its failure, perhaps relying upon Buckingham to effect that purpose. He must have felt that the time for open insurrection on the part of the Duke, although "the most untrue creature living," had not yet arrived. Perhaps he thought to avert it by allowing the announcement that the Princes were dead to pass unchallenged. It is not, however, consistent with his knowledge of men, to suppose he could imagine that such discountenancing of any further assertion of the rights of those who were already in their graves, would pacify the conspirators—least of all the Duke of Buckingham.

The news that the Princes had been assassinated spread far and wide, filling men's minds with horror and amazement. "There fell generally," says one, "such a dolour and inward sorrow into the hearts of all the people, all fear of the King's cruelty set aside, they in every town, street, and place openly wept, and piteously sobbed."* Meanwhile, Richard was leisurely returning towards London, and still receiving demonstrations of loyalty in every town. He had reached Lincoln on the 11th of October. Two days later the intelligence which had startled London a week earlier reached him. The Duke of Buckingham had declared for his cousin, Henry Tudor. Distrusted as he was by Richard, the Duke had given no previous signs of positive disloyalty, beyond an avoidance of the Court, which first aroused the King's suspicion;† and although sinister rumours had been circulated, even before the coronation, their sudden confirmation took

* Grafton, part ii., p. 119. † More, p. 506.

Richard by surprise. He summoned the Duke to his presence in "exceeding courteous" terms, to which Buckingham made no response. Whether, as Polydore Vergil asserts, he thought either by fraud or force to cut off his formidable foe, or, as is more probable, to learn from him the true fate of the Princes, and to effect an enduring reconciliation, he repeated his conciliatory summons. The Duke alleged sickness as a reason for non-compliance. His treasonable purpose was now clear; and the King "sent for him again with threatening words. Then the Duke openly desired that he would come to *his enemy.*" *

After his conferences with Margaret and Bishop Morton, Buckingham, finding that the Lancastrians were taking courage from the rising flame of public indignation, had planned an insurrection in the southern counties to take effect on the 18th of October. He had communicated his arrangements to the Earl of Richmond, desiring him to make a simultaneous descent upon the coast. One of his agents was William Colyngbourne, whose hatred of the King found other means of expression than the writing of a seditious distich. In the following year this man suffered the barbarous penalty inflicted upon traitors. The charge against him was that he had sent an agent to the Earl of Richmond and his adherents in Brittany.

"To declare unto them that they should do very well to return into England with all such power as they might get before the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist next ensuing; for so they might receive all the revenues of the realm due at

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 199.

the feast of St. Michael next before the said feast of St. Luke. And that if the said Earl of Richmond with his part-takers, following the counsel of the said Colyngbourne, would arrive at the haven of Poole in Dorsetshire, he, the said Colyngbourne, and other his associates, would cause the people to rise in arms and to levy war against King Richard, taking part with the said Earl and his friends, so that all things should be at their commandments. Moreover, to move the said Earl to send the said John Cheney unto the French King to advertise him that his ambassadors sent into England should be dallied with, only to drive off the time till the winter season were past, and that then in the beginning of summer, King Richard meant to make war into France, invading that realm with all puissance; and so by this means to persuade the French King to aid the Earl of Richmond and his part-takers in their quarrel against King Richard."*

The disappearance of the Princes favoured the designs of Buckingham. But the report of their murder by command of their unnatural uncle was prematurely circulated. It ran like wild-fire through the land, inflaming the passions of Richard's enemies, horrifying his friends, and everywhere neutralising the favourable impression made by the royal progress. In Kent, especially, the ferment was so great as to lead to an outbreak in the first week of October, for which Buckingham was unprepared. Tidings of this rising reached Richard on the 10th of October. How little it was expected is shown incidentally by the fact that he had not the Great Seal with him, and was consequently without full official

* Gairdner's "Richard III.," p. 235.

means of enforcing with energy and rapidity such measures as the emergency required.* On the 13th he wrote to York for a body of horse. "The Duke of Buckingham," he says, "is turned upon us contrary to his duty and his allegiance, and intendeth the utter destruction of us, you, and all other our true subjects that have taken our part." The Mayor is therefore enjoined to send as many men as he can muster defensibly arrayed on horseback to meet him at Leicester on the 21st.† The Chancellor, who was confined to his bed in London, was ordered to send the Great Seal to Grantham. This letter to the Chancellor bears the following postscript, written round the margin, in the King's uncouth hand:

"We would most gladly ye came yourself if that ye may; and if ye may not, we pray you not to fail, but to accomplish in all diligence our said commandment, to send our Seal incontinent upon the sight hereof as we trust you, with such as ye trust, and the officers pertaining to attend with it; praying you to ascertain us of your news there. Here, loved be God, is all well and truly determined for to resist the malice of him that had best cause to be true, the Duke of Buckingham, the most untrue creature living; whom with God's grace we shall not be long till that we will be in that parts, and subdue his malice. We assure you there never was falser traitor purveyed for, as this bearer Gloucester shall shew you." ‡

Richard acted with characteristic energy. A proclamation against Buckingham was issued at York on the 16th, and at Hull on the following day. A week later, commissions for the levying of troops were issued from Grantham, the Great Seal

* Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 504. † Davies' "York Records," p. 477.
‡ Campbell's "Chancellors," vol. i., p. 347.

being affixed by the King's verbal command, instead of by the usual authority of Privy Seal Writs, which would have involved delay. On the same day, the 23rd of October, at Leicester, a proclamation against the rebels was prepared for publication in London, and distributed through the Midland and Southern Counties. It is observable that, in this document, it is the immoral lives of the leaders of the rebellion which are denounced rather than the rebellion itself.

It began by reciting how, in conformity with his coronation oath, Richard had begun his reign with a general amnesty, hoping thereby to have secured the allegiance of all his subjects, how he had laboured to secure the impartial administration of justice, "having full confidence and trust that all oppressors and extortioners of his subjects, horrible adulterers and bawds, provoking the high indignation and displeasure of God, should have been reconciled." Yet the Marquis of Dorset, who was notorious for having dishonoured "sundry maids, widows, and wives," the Bishops of Ely and Salisbury, and others, were in league with the Duke of Buckingham and had inspired the people to revolt. In such company we are startled to read that one of the purposes of the insurrection is to secure "the damnable maintenance of vices and sin as they had done in times past, to the great displeasure of God, and evil example of all Christian people." A reward of £1,000 is offered for the capture of the Duke of Buckingham, and 1,000 marks for the Marquis of Dorset, the Bishop of Ely, and the Bishop of Salisbury.*

Having learned that it was the purpose of the Duke of

* "Fœdera," vol. xii., p. 204.

Buckingham to pass the Severn at Gloucester, the King now hastened to Salisbury, the very centre of the disaffected population. Here he learned that the Courtenays had risen in formidable strength, whilst at Maidstone and Rochester, Newbury, and Exeter, the partisans of Henry Tudor were in arms, the Marquis of Dorset, Sir John Fogge, and the King's brother-in-law, Sir Thomas St. Leger, being their most prominent leaders.*

The Duke of Brittany had hitherto given Henry Tudor nothing but good wishes, alleging treaty obligations as an impediment to active assistance. Nothing daunted by the hesitation of his host, of whose good will he was assured, Henry addressed himself with better success to the Duke's wife. She listened to his promises of friendship and aid when he should be King of England, warmly espoused his cause, "became an earnest suitor unto the Duke, her husband, and prevailed both for his liberty and aid." † Treaty obligations were cast to the wind, and by the connivance of the Duke of Brittany, who furnished him with men, money, and ships, the Earl of Richmond effected his escape. With a fleet variously estimated at from fifteen to forty sail, and an army of "five hundred manly Bretons," he left the shores of Brittany on the 12th of October, hoping to land at Plymouth. The storm, of whose ravages in the Severn valley we shall shortly hear, dispersed his fleet. A little before night the storm suddenly burst upon them, the ships parted company; some were driven back to Brittany, others sought refuge in the harbours of Normandy. One vessel only held its course towards the shores of England

* "Croyland Chronicle."

† Buck, p. 42.

in company with that in which Henry sailed. Tossed all night before the waves "they came at the last, very early in the morning, when the wind grew calm, upon the south coast of the island against the haven called Poole." Armed men thronged the beach, and with friendly gesticulations beckoned them to land. Before venturing to do so, Henry sent a boat ashore to inquire whether they were friends or foes. Their leaders replied that they were stationed there by the Duke of Buckingham to receive his friends. But the Earl, who "in all things was circumspect and cautiously timid," still refused to land, "suspecting it to be a train, as it was indeed, after that he did see none of his own ships within view hoisted sail and with prosperous wind came into Normandy."* Not, however, until he had prospected Plymouth, where the energy and foresight of Richard had anticipated danger and provided against it.

It was well for the Earl of Richmond that Louis XI. had gone to that grave the thought of which filled his mind with such awful horror, because, with a conscience preternaturally enlightened, he deliberately refused to follow its dictates.† The Duchess of Beaujeu, whose influence was supreme at the French Court, invited the Earl to Paris, where the young King gave him a gracious welcome. "After which he returned to Vannes, in Brittany, to remain there till a more favourable opportunity." ‡

Buckingham had not relied upon Henry for material

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 202. Buck, in Kennett, p. 534.

† When a priest recited a prayer for his welfare both in body *and soul*, Louis is said to have bidden him omit the two last words, observing that it was not prudent to importune heaven with too many requests at once.

‡ De Comines. Supplement, Chapter vii.

assistance, and was not therefore discouraged by his discomfiture. With the instinct of the warrior he took his place at the post of danger, and unfurled his banner at Brecknock.

The Earl of Richmond had been actively pushing his interests in Wales. On the 18th of October, the very day which Buckingham had fixed for the rising, Edward Plumpton, Lord Strange's secretary, wrote: "People in this country be so troubled, in such commandment as they have in the King's name *and otherwise,* marvellously that they know not what to do. My lord Strange goeth forth from Lathom upon Monday next with 10,000 men, whither we cannot say. The Duke of Buckingham has so many men, as it is said here, that he is able to go where he will, but I trust that he shall be right withstood and all his malice, and else were great pity. Messengers come daily, both from the King's grace and the Duke, into this country. . . . Written at Aldclife, upon St. Luke's Day."* Remembering that the Earl of Richmond was a Welshman by descent, it might have been expected that the Principality would espouse his cause. This, however, was not the case. Sir Thomas Vaughan, of Tretower, was loyal to Richard; a fact which has been ignored by the writers who represent his father as having been "foully murdered" at Pontefract, "without the form of a trial by the order of the Protector." He is described as "a warlike potentate of Brecknockshire," and was evidently a chieftain whom Buckingham could not afford to despise. He now rendered signal service to the King in preventing a junction between the Welsh and English rebels. Humphrey Stafford,

* The Plumpton Correspondence, Cam. Soc., p. 45.

HENRY VII.

also a kinsman of the Duke of Buckingham, guarded the passes and broke down the bridges by which alone Buckingham could march into England. In thus thwarting the well-conceived plans of the Duke they were favoured by circumstances beyond the control of man.

The elements were on Richard's side. When Buckingham, bent on crossing the Severn at Gloucester, passed into Herefordshire, Sir Thomas Vaughan seized and despoiled his ancestral castle, and the Severn proved impassable. The whole country between Gloucester and Bristol was flooded with the autumnal rains. On the 15th of October, a gale described as "the greatest wind that ever was at Bristol, which caused a wonderful great flood," * swept the valley of the Severn. A deluge, still spoken of as the Great Water or "Buckingham's Water," followed, wrecking the homesteads and destroying the cattle even on the hill sides. Men, women, and children were drowned in their beds, which floated down the valleys bearing their ghastly freight. The city of Bristol was flooded, great damage being done to goods both in the merchants' warehouses and in private dwellings.† When the inundation was at its height, the prevailing terror was converted into panic by an unexpected eclipse of the moon, which presented some unusual phenomena. The luminary appeared "of divers colours, namely, a strake of red beneath a strake of blue in the midst, and a strake of green above that, so that at the top a little light appeared." ‡ In a superstitious age it was inevitable that such a pheno-

* "Memoirs of Bristol," by Rev. S. Seyer, vol. ii., p. 202.
† "History of Bristol," by John Corry, vol. i., p. 308.
‡ Seyer, vol. ii., p. 202.

menon should suggest thoughts of Divine judgment. The people of the west were thus led to regard the Great Water as a judgment of God upon a people who had allowed their princes to be murdered. Nay, the chroniclers tell us that for years after, at the mere indications of an approaching storm, people would "openly speak and cry that God did take vengeance and punish the poor Englishmen for the crime and offence of their ungracious King, whom they blamed, accursed, and wished to have extreme tortures." *

Starving, and threatened with destruction, or the victims of superstition, the rebels under Courtenay in the West of England, and those under Buckingham, who vainly sought to join them, deserted. Neither by prayers nor by threats could the Duke keep his men together.† The few who remained, "without money, victuals, or wages," clamoured to return to their homes, and Buckingham was fain to give them leave. A reward of £1,000 in money or £100 in land was offered for his apprehension, and he knew that he could not trust his demoralised followers. He disbanded them and retired in disguise, to conceal himself till he could raise a fresh army. Escaping into Shropshire, he sought shelter in the house of a trusted retainer "who owed him many obligations." The age of chivalry was passing away, but its spirit yet lingered, or Buckingham would have known that treachery and ingratitude are commonly found where fidelity should be most assured. This man, one Ralph Banaster, of Lacon Hall, near Wem, yielding to cupidity, or from fear of Richard's resentment, betrayed the Duke to John Mytton, Sheriff of the county.

* Grafton, p. 807.

† More, in Kennett, p. 506.

Mytton surrounded Banaster's house and captured the Duke, whom he found concealed in the orchard in the garb of a peasant. He was taken to Salisbury, where Richard peremptorily refused his urgent request for a personal interview. Apart from the confession of Buckingham's son—upon which too much discredit has been thrown*—that his father's purpose in imploring this favour was that, in making semblance to kneel before him, he might stab Richard to the heart;—apart from this, the King's refusal was fully justified. No submission, no offer of future service could purge the crime of treason such as his. We are moved to pity by the Duke's tragic fate; every generous nature is revolted by the harsh severity with which the King treated his illustrious prisoner; but we wrong Richard if we assume that he made his will lord of his reason. Buckingham had disturbed the peace of the country for purely selfish ends, he had incurred the penalty of treason, his power for mischief could only end with his life, and in the circumstances of the time the saintly Henry VI. himself must have acted the part which has brought so much odium upon Richard.

After causing the Duke to be examined—when he perfidiously denounced several of his fellow-conspirators—Richard ordered his immediate execution. It was Sunday, and the feast of All Souls, but with the cruelty of hate † Richard refused to listen to expostulation, and on that Sunday afternoon the most powerful nobleman of England was beheaded

* "No circumstance is more expressive of the Duke's real character than the deliberate meditation of this vindictive treachery."—SHARON TURNER.

† So say the chroniclers, whose narratives, however, as Buck observes, throw "so much gall and envy" upon Richard's story "as cannot possibly fall into the style of an ingenuous and charitable pass."

under the shadow of the cathedral whose bishop, with the Marquis of Dorset, the two Courtenays, and others of the rebel leaders had taken ship to Brittany.

Holinshed tells us that Ralph Banaster never received so much as an instalment of the promised reward for the betrayal of Buckingham. In this transparent fiction he is followed by other Tudor historians, who delight to discover the hand of Divine retribution resting upon Richard and all his adherents. This is Hall's version of the story:

"Whether this Banaster betrayed the Duke more for fear than covetous many men do doubt; but sure it is that shortly after he had betrayed the Duke, his master, his son and heir waxed mad, and so died in a boar's sty; his eldest daughter, of excellent beauty, was suddenly stricken with a foul leprosy; his second son very marvellously deformed of his limbs, and made decrepid; his younger son in a small puddle was strangled and drowned; and he, being of extreme age, arraigned and found guilty of a murder, and by his clergy saved. And as for his thousand pounds, King Richard gave him not one farthing, saying that he who would be untrue to so good a master would be false to all other, howbeit some say that he had a small office or a farm to stop his mouth withal."*

The remarks of the Croyland chronicler suggest that unmerited obloquy may have been attached by Hall and Grafton to the memory of Banaster. "The discovery of the Duke's

* "Hall's Chronicle," p. 395. It should be remembered that Hall wrote sixty years after the death of Buckingham. His carelessness is shown in the fact that he mistakes the Christian name, calling him *John* Banaster. Fabyan, writing thirty years earlier, mistakes the date by a year, and says that Richard offered a reward for the Duke of *both* £1,000 and £100 in land.—See Owen and Blakeway's "Shrewsbury," vol. i., p. 237.

hiding-place was made," he says, "in consequence of provisions of a superior kind being conveyed to him." The probability is that, to save his own life, Banaster connived at the Duke's capture.* It is impossible to accord him credit for greater humanity than is involved in this hypothesis, in view of the terms in which the grant of the manor and lordship of Ealding in Kent, "late belonging to the King's great rebel and traitor, the Duke of Buckingham," was afterwards made, "in consideration of the true and faithful service which the said Ralph hath lately done, for and about the taking and bringing the said rebel into the King's hands." †

Shakspeare makes no allusion to Banaster; but the old plays employed by him, which Mr. Hazlitt has printed in the "Shakspeare Library," present Banaster in a less favourable light than does the continuator of the "Croyland Chronicle." In 1579 Dr. Thomas Legge, Master of Caius College, Cambridge, printed his "Richardus Tertius," which was performed before the Queen.‡ Fifteen years later appeared the "True Tragedy of Richard III." Both plays furnish internal evidence that the authors derived their facts from sources independent of Hall. Readers who are familiar with the latter chronicler will perceive this in the quotation of a single line:

> *Buckingham.*—Ah, villain! *thou betrayedst me for lucre,* and not for duty to thy Prince.§

It is probable that the King, who had recently sold the Crown plate to pay the troops, had not £1,000 to give away,

* "Croyland Chronicle." See also Blakeway's "History of Shrewsbury," vol. i., p. 236.

† Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 37 b. and 131.

‡ Hazlitt's "Shakspeare Library," vol. v., p. 132.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

and that the manor of Ealding, which he conferred on Banaster and his heirs male for ever, to hold by knight's service, was a liberal discharge of his claim.* But the reward of iniquity never prospers. In less than two years, Henry VII. rescinded the grant, and restored the lordship to Buckingham's son, the legal owner.† In contrast with the mercenary conduct of Banaster, the fidelity of Sir Richard and Dame Elizabeth Delabere in the preservation of the infant heir of the Duke of Buckingham deserves record.‡

By his energy and decision Richard had baffled the policy of the Lancastrians and quelled the rebellion without striking a blow. He pushed on to Exeter, where he arrived on the 10th of November—the day on which Martin Luther was born. The Corporation propitiated him by offering the keys of the city, a congratulatory address, and two hundred gold nobles. Here his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas St. Leger, and two other insurgent leaders, who had failed to effect their escape, were beheaded. Other executions followed both in London and at Torrington, where a special assize to try the rebels was held under Lord Scrope.

A story, too probably apocryphal, is told by the chroniclers of Richard's visit to Exeter. He was greatly struck with the beauty of its situation, and visited the places of interest in the city, especially admiring the castle, its strength, and elevated site. Inquiring the name of the fortress, he is said to have been answered, "Rougemont." Unfamiliar with the Devonshire dialect, the King understood the reply to be

* Harl. MSS., codex 433, art. 900.
† See Hutton's "Richard III.," and "Croyland Chronicle."
‡ See Appendix D.

"Richmond," and recalling the warning of a soothsayer that his days would not be long after he had seen Richmond, he was displeased and alarmed. And so, hastily leaving Exeter, he returned to London!

A Welshman, named Morgan Kydwelly, and Sir James Tyrell, received commissions to enter all the castles of the Duke of Buckingham, both in Wales and in the Marches, and to confiscate his goods.* There is, perhaps, no more notable instance of Richard's fatal propensity to "take deep traitors for his dearest friends," than in the confidence he reposed in this Welshman. We shall meet with him again; but it may here be conveniently added that, in the following May, he was made Attorney-General, and his brother Geoffrey, Comptroller of the Customs at Southampton.†

Within a month from the issue of his proclamation against the rebels, Richard returned to London, his authority completely restored, and every rebel dead or outlawed. Terrible as was the vengeance executed, Richard was unrelenting only to those who had instigated the revolt. But even when the stability of his throne was threatened, executions such as that of Sir Thomas St. Leger, however consonant with the barbarous customs of the times, can only be regarded as criminal. They constituted a grievance for which it was impossible to atone, and those who had reason to resent it were only exasperated by the King's clemency to others. For, where the death sentence was commuted into confiscation of property, the general terms in which the warrants were framed afforded opportunity for the

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 121. † "Grants of Edward V." p. 30.

most cruel exactions. A "warrant for the delivery of all manner of sheep, horses, oxen, kine, swine, and other cattle to the king appertaining by the forfeiture of his rebels and traitors within the counties of Somerset and Dorset" lent the sanction of law to extortions on the part of irresponsible officials which cried for retribution. The attainders included one Duke, one Marquis, three Earls, three Bishops, and many Knights.* Compared with the confiscations of Edward IV. this list, though formidable, bears witness to Richard's moderation. It was so regarded by his contemporaries. "Had not his mercye exceeded his crueltye," writes one, "his safety had been more assured, and his name (peradventure) not soe mutch subject to obloquy: for though he cutt of the head of a mighty conspirator, yet he suffered this conspiracye to take soe deepe roote that in the end it cutt of his glory and overshadowed his greatness." †

The King's clemency was conspicuously shown in his treatment of Margaret Beaufort. The charge against her was that of having supplied her son with money, "desiring, procuring, and stirring" him to invade the realm. Of this she was clearly guilty, and there was nothing to prevent a tyrant from sending her to the scaffold. She was, indeed, deprived of all her titles and possessions, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. But the former were conferred upon her husband, who was also appointed her gaoler. Her machinations against the "implacable" King were hardly suspended, and were soon in more vigorous exercise than ever.

Rewards were liberally bestowed upon all who had been

* Lingard.

† MS. of William Cornewaleys, p. 11.

steadfast in their loyalty to the King, whose impartiality is strikingly shown in the appointment of Lord Stanley to the office of High Constable of England, which had been hereditary in the family of the Duke of Buckingham. It is difficult to believe that Richard could have supposed him ignorant of the alliance between his consort and the rebel Duke. It would appear, however, from the Act by which Margaret was attainted, that Richard had received satisfactory assurances of Stanley's future loyalty, as the penalty of death is therein remitted "considering the good service which Thomas Lord Stanley had done *and intended to do*, and for the good trust and love that the King hath in him." *

The merchants of London were favourable to the House of York, to whom they were indebted for the lucrative trade with Burgundy. They recognised in Richard a valiant, wise, and powerful sovereign, an administrator of tried ability, and a friend to commerce and the arts of peace. But though Sir George Buck says, "Thus farre, King Richard, in the voyage of his Affaires, had a promising Gale," even the citizens of London were contaminated with the distrust with which he was regarded in the south and west. The energy with which he had stamped out rebellion was exaggerated in rumours which reached the metropolis, where the report that he had been accessory to the murder of the Princes had been industriously circulated.

* "Rot. Parl.," vol. vi., p. 244.

CHAPTER II.

Is the murder of the sons of Edward IV. an historical fact? And if so, was Richard III. the perpetrator of one of the foulest crimes recorded on the page of history? If Shakspeare's great drama had never been written, would judicial historians have accepted the theory which his immortal genius has stamped almost with the authority of inspiration? We venture to think that neither question can be answered with an unqualified affirmative. No modern historian has jeopardised his reputation by supporting the claims of Perkin Warbeck. Yet all laws of evidence lend greater probability to his story than to the tradition which Shakspeare has imperishably enshrined in the heart of Christendom.

It is certain that thirty years after the disappearance of the Princes their fate remained a mystery, and that no subsequent light has been thrown upon it. John Stow, the laborious antiquary of the sixteenth century, to whose labours history owes a debt of gratitude, has left on record his conviction that the murder "was never proved by any credible evidence, no not by probable suspitions, or so much as by the Knights of the Post that King Richard was guilty of it." Until the appearance of Perkin Warbeck, when it became

Henry's interest to refute his imposture by proving the murder, no writer of repute had charged Richard with the crime.

The murder of the Princes is mentioned only by three contemporary writers, the Abbot of Croyland, Fabyan, and Rous. Of these the first two speak of it only as a report. The continuator of the Croyland Chronicle, after narrating Richard's visit to York, says, "*while these things were going on,* the two sons of Edward before named remained in the Tower of London." * He further says that it was *after* the issue of Buckingham's proclamation, which was in October, that "a rumour was spread that the sons of King Edward had died a violent death, *but it was uncertain how.*" † The most reliable of the contemporary chroniclers thus fixes the date of their death as subsequent to the 8th of September, the public knowledge of it in the first fortnight in October.

Fabyan writes: "*As the common fame went,* King Richard had, within the Tower, put unto secret death the two sons of his brother, Edward IV." ‡ Rous, whose uncorroborated statements are never worthy of credit, assigns their death to a period *antecedent to the coronation* of Richard, who, he says, "ascended the throne of the murdered King." §

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 490. † *Ibid.*, p. 491. Fabyan, p. 670.

§ The passage from Rous is worth quoting as an illustration of his method. He courageously deduces Richard's crimes from a calculation of his nativity. In his age the authority sufficed, and in our own the stories which have no better foundation are still credited. "Gloucester," he says, "obtained or rather invented the title of Protector to promote himself, and disinherit King Edward, who, with his brother, was imprisoned so closely that the particular death by which they were martyred was known to few. *The throne of the murdered King* was *then* usurped by their Protector, Richard the tyrant, who had remained two years in his mother's womb, and at Fotheringay on the feast of 4,000 virgins was born with long hair, and his teeth complete. At his

There remains the testimony of Sir Thomas More, who at this time was three years of age, and, writing twenty years after the alleged murder, tells the story with details which it is impossible to accept as historical. Substantially his story is as follows: During the royal progress to Gloucester, the King's mind misgave him that his right to the crown would not be recognised so long as his nephews lived. He therefore resolved upon their murder, and sent John Green, "a creature of his, with a letter and credence also," to Sir Robert Brackenbury, the Constable of the Tower, with instructions to put the two Princes to death. Green returned to Richard at Warwick, with the tidings of Brackenbury's refusal. Turning to a page, the King exclaimed: "Alas, who is there that a man can trust, when those who I thought would most surely serve me, will not do what I command them?" The page replied: "There lies a man on the pallet in the outer chamber, who I am sure will think nothing too hard that you shall require him to do." This was Sir James Tyrell, "a brave, handsome man, who deserved a better master."

It is noteworthy that More calls him Sir James Tyrell, though he afterwards says that he received the honour of knighthood for his nefarious service.

The King, he continues, "knowing how aspiring he was," thought the page had hit upon the right person. He went

nativity the scorpion was ascendant and sign in the house of Mars; and as the Scorpion's aspect is bland and *fawning*, its sting mortal, such was Richard, who received his master Edward with kisses and *fawning* caresses, and in three months murdered him and his brother, poisoned his own wife, and what was most detestable both to God and the English nation, slew the sanctified Henry VI."—Rous, p. 224.

into the chamber, where he found Sir James, and Sir Thomas Tyrell his brother, on a pallet bed, to whom he said merrily, "What! are ye a-bed so soon, gentlemen?" Calling Sir James aside he found him ready to carry out his wishes, and dismissed him armed with a warrant requiring Brackenbury to deliver up the keys of the Tower to him for one night. Taking with him John Dighton, his groom, and Miles Forrest, one of the gaolers in whose custody the Princes were, he entered their chamber. The Princes were asleep, and the two men suffocated them by pressing the pillows hard down upon their mouths. Sir James saw their dead bodies and witnessed their burial at the foot of a staircase; but the King, disapproving of "their being buried in so vile a corner," a priest "took up the bodies again, and secretly interred them in such a place as, by the occasion of his death, could never come to light." Sir James Tyrell returned to the King from whom he received great thanks for his services, and, More adds, "as some say, he there made him a knight." *

This singular narrative is prefaced by some remarkable words which forcibly suggest a suspicion that *they* are Sir Thomas More's comment upon a narrative not his own, and which his honesty and intelligence alike compelled him to reject as apocryphal: "Whose death and final infortune hath natheless so far come in question, that some yet remain in doubt whether they were in Richard's days destroyed or no."

"This narrative," says Horace Walpole, "teems with improbabilities and notorious falsehoods, and is flatly contradicted

* More's Works, pp. 67, 68.

by so many unquestionable facts, that if we have no other reason to believe the murder of Edward V. and his brother than the account transmitted to us, we shall very much doubt whether they were ever murdered at all." The narrative of More is more than improbable. If any reliance is to be placed on other, and earlier narratives, it is full of *impossibilities.* For, on examination, it will be found that these Lancastrian fables are mutually destructive, and we must look elsewhere for facts. Those who agree that a murder was perpetrated, differ both as to the authors of the crime, the methods employed, and the place of sepulture. One represents them to have been suffocated by pillows, another to have been slain with a sword, whilst the more cautious affirm that "there were divers opinions of the manner of the death of this young King and his brother." It was commonly believed, says one, that "their bodies were enclosed in a heavy chest, placed on board a ship going to Flanders, and thrown into the sea." Another opinion is that "they were induced to hide themselves in this chest, which their murderers then locked, burying them alive in a great pit under a stair." *

But, to return to Sir Thomas More. Assuming the truth of his narrative, the first inquiry which suggests itself is—What was the fate of Brackenbury? The Richard of Sir Thomas More, a vindictive, cold-blooded, cruel, irresponsible tyrant, who "spared no man's death, whose life withstood his purpose," would assuredly have made short shrift with one who had opposed his will, and was in possession of so dan-

* Rastell's "Chronicle," p. 293.

gerous a secret. So also Sir Robert Brackenbury—whom Green is said to have found "kneeling before Our Lady in the Tower, who plainly answered that he would never put them to death" *—a man of irreproachable honesty and integrity, must have shrunk from further service of a master who, to his certain knowledge, was steeped to the lips in crime of the most revolting nature. But it was not so. Richard's confidence was not withdrawn, nor Sir Robert Brackenbury's loyal service suspended. On the contrary, he received many proofs of the royal favour;† he was the most faithful of his sovereign's adherents, and eventually fell fighting bravely at his side, when Catesby sought safety in flight, and the Stanleys in treachery. He had been known to Richard from his youth, and a man of his character—religious and humane—was not one to whom his sovereign would have entrusted the execution of the foulest and most inhuman crime.

It is also worthy of note that Forrest was shortly afterwards appointed Keeper of the Wardrobe to the Lady Cecily, an office to which it is impossible to suppose the King would nominate the murderer of her grandsons.

Again, Richard was the most wary of men—"close and secret" is More's description of him—and was surrounded by creatures such as Catesby and Ratcliffe, upon whose courage and depravity he could equally rely. Is it then conceivable that he would have employed on so dangerous an errand an obscure menial such as Green; that he would have entrusted such an one with a *letter*, which, if either by carelessness or corruption, it had fallen into other hands,

* Grafton, p. 803. † Harl. MSS., codex 433, art. 765.

"would have blasted his name for ever, would have set the whole country in rebellion, and most likely have cost him his crown and life?" * Would he have risked the compliance of Brackenbury? Or, "if he had been so rash, was it Richard's character to have brooked a refusal from a person on whom he had heaped offices and honours?" Is this possible in the man whom More characterises as "close and secret?" Or, having learned that Brackenbury was recusant, at which says More, "the King took great displeasure and thought," would he have issued a *second* warrant, subject to innumerable casualties, commanding Brackenbury to surrender the keys of the Tower *for one night?* † It is Lord Bacon—who showed an invariable compliancy in the presence of great persons—not Sir Thomas More, who mentions three several *warrants*, doubtless struck with the absurdity of More's assumption that the Lieutenant would have committed himself to so grave a dereliction of duty without such authority. What, then, has become of these warrants? Did Henry VII. discover them? Has any trace of them ever been found? "It has been anxiously sought for, but sought in vain, and we may therefore conclude that Sir Thomas More's is nothing but one of the passing tales of the day, and we may believe that if the young Princes were destroyed in the Tower, Brackenbury must have been instrumental in their murder, and have acted in obedience to instructions given to him personally by Richard previous to his departure from London." ‡

* Bayley's "Tower of London," vol. i., p. 61.

† "King Richard, having directed his warrant for the putting of them to death to Brackenbury, the Lieutenant of the Tower, was by him refused. Whereupon the King directed his warrant to Sir James Tyrell, to receive the keys of the Tower from the Lieutenant for the space of a night, for the King's special service."—BACON'S *Henry VII.*, p. 123.

‡ Bayley's "Tower of London," vol. i., p. 62.

More requires us to believe that Richard communicated his vexation at Brackenbury's refusal to an unnamed page; employed, as the agent of a diabolical scheme, a man whose principal motive for undertaking it was jealousy of Richard's favourites;* and that, where secrecy was of such transcendent importance, he suffered his purpose to become known to at least nine individuals. If that were so, there could have been no difficulty in bringing the crime home to Richard upon the clearest evidence, since all but Brackenbury survived the accession of Henry VII., to whom it was their interest to divulge the facts. But if we could suppose Richard thus wanting in prudence and self-respect, the motive which More attributes to Tyrell would still be an impossible one, since he occupied as Master of the Horse, Chief of Richard's body-guard, and Steward of the Duchy of Cornwall, higher and more lucrative offices than Catesby and Ratcliffe.†

It is admitted by More, as we have already seen, that the crime had so far come in question, that some remained long in doubt whether the Princes were, in Richard's days, destroyed

* "A man . . . kept down by Catesby and Ratcliffe." Here again the Lancastrian writers contradict one another. Polydore Vergil tells us that Tyrell, far from accepting the King's commission with alacrity, he, "being forced to do the King's command, rode sorrowfully to London."—Book xxv., Cam. Soc., p. 188.

† "Miss Halsted," vol. ii., p. 199, *note*. The attempt has been made to shew that the Master of the Horse at Richard's coronation was Sir Thomas Tyrell. It is true that the name Thomas is once mentioned in the Wardrobe Accounts in that capacity, but so also is James. This, therefore, would prove nothing, even though we did not know how frequently, as we have seen in the case of Banaster, a wrong Christian name was applied to individuals. Moreover, we are certain that Sir James held this office both before and after the coronation. The attempt to shew that, in the interval, it was held by his brother, with the object of making it appear as a reward conferred by Richard for Sir James Tyrell's nefarious services, is as futile as it is disingenuous.

or not. This is inconsistent with the statement of Grafton and others that the fact of their death was proclaimed by Richard;* it is strong presumptive evidence that they were not murdered. Polydore Vergil, whose history was written at the request of Henry VII., and with the purpose of discrediting Perkin Warbeck, whilst insisting upon the fact of their death, says "by what kind of death these sely children were executed, it is not certainly known." † The only other writer who mentions the murder as anything more than rumour, and directly charges Richard with the crime, is Andreas, Poet Laureate of Henry VII., who differs from all others in saying that Richard caused his nephews *to be put to death with the sword.* ‡

Until after the accession of Henry VII., the prevailing opinion was that one of the Princes had died a natural death in the Tower. "And all this time," says Lord Bacon, "it was still whispered everywhere that *at least one* of the children of Edward IV. was living."§ Sir George Buck also, "on the testimony of sundry grave and discreete persons," says that one had died in the Tower, a fate which, in his mother's judgment, his sickly constitution rendered likely enough.|| No measures were taken, on the accession of Henry, to attach to Richard a crime which, if proved, would have united

* Polydore Vergil attributes the circulation of the report to the King. Grafton says that "he caused the rumour to be spread." And so careful an inquirer as Mr. Sharon Turner writes: "Richard deemed it for his interest to diffuse the report that the Princes were no more."—Vol. iii., p. 486.

† Book xxv., p. 189. ‡ Jesse's "Richard III.," p. 176.

§ Bacon, in Kennett, p. 19.

|| Holinshed represents Queen Elizabeth as assigning this as her reason for refusing to surrender the Duke of York; "he hath awhile been so sore diseased, vexed with sickness, and is so newly rather a little mended than well recovered." —HOLINSHED, vol. iii., p. 374.

the whole country under Henry's sceptre. On the contrary, it is not so much as mentioned in the Act of Parliament which attainted Richard.

The conduct of Henry VII. towards the ex-Queen, on the appearance of Lambert, disclosed his apprehensions that at least one of her sons was still living.* He seized her person and confined her for life in a solitary cloister. His equally cruel execution of the young Earl of Warwick was avowedly prompted by his conviction that Warbeck was known to be descended from the House of York.† The question of his identity with the Duke of York I do not propose to consider; but it is abundantly evident that Henry VII. believed that only after Warbeck's death could he enjoy an unequivocal right to the throne.

It is impossible that Cardinal Bourchier entertained any suspicion that either of the Princes had met with a violent death. All his sympathies were Lancastrian; Henry Tudor was his nephew; he was more responsible than any man for their safe custody, for which he had pledged himself to the Queen; and he had less to fear than any man in the honest performance of his duty, for "an archbishop was sacred, a cardinal inviolable." Yet he appears to have made no inquiry into the reports of the murder. We do not hear of him as one of the witnesses upon whose evidence Henry VII. relied; or as one of More's or Polydore Vergil's informers. On the other hand, there is some reason to suppose that Henry sought, unsuccessfully, to inveigle him into a confession at least of suspicion. Lord Bacon says that, "on St. Simon's and St.

* "Appendix to Henry," p. 433.

† *Ibid.*, 433, 434.

Jude's even, the King dined with Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal, and from Lambeth *went by land over the bridge to the Tower.*" "Has not this," asks Horace Walpole "the appearance of some curiosity in the King on the subject of the Princes, of whose fate he was uncertain?" *

More's story is avowedly a congeries of unaccredited rumours, the various items of which are introduced with such reservations as "they say," or "I have heard." It rests upon the doubtful confession of John Dighton and Sir James Tyrell, who, says Lord Bacon, "agreed both in a tale *as the King gave out.*" We have already referred to Bacon's narrative, but have not exhausted its significance. When Tyrell, armed with Richard's second warrant, repaired, he says, to the Tower by night, attended by his two servants, "himself stood at the stair-foot, and sent these two villains to execute the murder; that they smothered them (the Princes) in their bed, and that done, called up their master to see their naked bodies which they had laid forth. They were then buried under the stairs and some stones cast upon them. That when the report was made to King Richard that his will was done, he gave Sir James Tyrell great thanks, but took exception to the place of their burial, being too base for them that were king's children. Whereupon, another night, *by the King's warrant renewed*, their bodies were removed by the priest of the Tower, and buried by him in some place which, by means of the priest's death soon after, could not be known." †

There can be little doubt that Henry VII. fabricated this story of the removal of the bodies by Brackenbury's chaplain,

* "Historic Doubts," p. 41. † Bacon, in Kennett, vol. i., p. 608.

to account for the non-corroboration of the murderers' story. Tyrell and Dighton knew nothing of such removal. Sir George Buck says that an unsuccessful search was made in the spot indicated by the murderers, and it was considered dangerous to ask the attestation of Tyrell to the story which Bacon, with evident incredulity, says, "*the King gave out.*" Bacon's language is yet further suggestive of doubt. "This much then," he says, "*was delivered abroad* to be the effect of their examinations. But the King natheless made no use of them in any of his declarations, whereby (as it seems) these examinations left the business somewhat perplexed. And as for Sir James Tyrell, he was soon after beheaded in the Tower for other matters of treason. But John Dighton (*who it seemeth spake best for the King*) was forthwith set at liberty, and was the principal means of divulging this *tradition.*" * It does not appear to have occurred, either to More or Bacon, that there was anything strange in the fact that Tyrell's guilt was never suspected until after his arrest in connection with the Duke of Suffolk's rebellion in 1502—nineteen years after the alleged murder of the Princes. His confession was then open to the suspicion of being inspired by the hope of a reprieve. The inference to be drawn from his execution is that he did not implicate Richard as Henry desired. Dighton, who "spake best for the King," and was set at liberty, was Tyrell's groom and, on his own confession, a mercenary perjured villain, whom it was unnecessary to put out of the way if, as has been suggested, Henry VII. falsified the evidence sworn to by him and his master. †

The trustworthiness of More's uncorroborated statements

* Bacon, in Kennett, p. 608. † See Hutton's "Richard III.," p. 168.

is not enhanced by his accuracy in such as admit of a rigid historical test. Thus he doubtless records the tradition current in his time, when he represents Tyrell as receiving the honour of knighthood as the reward of his inhuman crime. But the fact is that he had received that distinction at the hands of Edward IV., in whose reign he had held the office of Master of the Horse, in which capacity he figured as we have seen in Richard's coronation procession. From Richard himself, whilst still Protector, he had also received a distinct order of knighthood—that of Knight-Banneret—in recognition of his distinguished services during his last Scottish campaign.* This is wholly inconsistent with More's story of an obscure man laying upon a pallet, ready for any infamous work. Tyrell was "of an ancient and high family."† We have already encountered him as the agent of Edward IV. in conveying the Countess of Warwick from Beaulieu sanctuary; and during Richard's progress from London to York he occupied a position of trust, as Master of the King's Pages.‡ And further, the fact that he stood high in Richard's confidence was shewn before the coronation. When Stanley, Morton, and Rotheram were arrested, the Archbishop of York was "committed to the custody of Sir James Tyrell, Knight."§ He was also entrusted with the stewardship of divers lordships in Wales and the Marches.‖

* The order of Knight-Banneret was only conferred upon those who were *already Knights*, and had distinguished themselves in fighting under the royal banner.

† Bayley's "History of the Tower." He had also married the daughter of a Knight, Sir John Arundel, who was concerned in Buckingham's rebellion. "Rot. Parl.," vi., 256.

‡ H. Walpole. § Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 182.

‖ Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 54.

In the troublous times in which More lived and edited a history, almost every page of which is crowded with improbabilities and anachronisms, the fact of Tyrell's knighthood may easily have been overlooked. But the discovery of the Coronation roll of Richard III. places the fact beyond the reach even of cavil. We there read that, "Sir James Tyrell, Knight, maister of the hors to our sayd soverayn lorde the Kynge," received certain commissions and took part in the coronation procession. But if More's statement is untrustworthy, that of Lord Bacon is, to use his own words, "naked of proof." It rests upon no more substantial basis than political rancour, and is unworthy of credence. "Fawning, flattery, and cringing were the means of promotion at the Court of Elizabeth," and Bacon, fawned, flattered, cringed, and perverted facts to curry favour with his royal mistress. Tyrell, instead of being "soon after beheaded," was not committed to the Tower until 1502, and then for having, with that true knight's courage which has been so wantonly aspersed, succoured the infant Duke of Suffolk. And this was "the employed man for King Richard," whom Henry VII. had made Governor of Guisnes! If Tyrell and Dighton made the confession which "the King gave out," it is simply incredible that More would have failed to produce it, as conclusive evidence that the murder was actually perpetrated. The silence of Fabyan completes the evidence that the "confession" was a fraud. A city man, and a courtier, a careful chronicler, favourable to the Lancastrians, and reliable chiefly in relation to events occurring in the metropolis, he could not have passed over one of such capital importance. But Fabyan's history never sinks into a wild romance.

No examination into this subject could pretend to completeness which ignored the testimony of so intelligent an observer as the Italian priest, Polydore Vergil. Although his history was not commenced until twenty-five years after the mysterious disappearance of the Princes, and a little later than that attributed to Sir Thomas More, he came into England in the reign of Edward IV. and, from his high connections, took a deep interest in public affairs. As we have already seen, he says that as late as 1508 or 1509, it was not certainly known how these "sely children" came by their death. True, he personally attributed their death to Richard; but, even so, his narrative is entirely inconsistent with that of More. For, whereas the latter says that their fate was known to the Duke of Buckingham when he left the King at Gloucester, Polydore Vergil writes: "Where (at Gloucester) *the while he* (Richard) *tarried,* the heinous guilt of wicked consequences did so fret him every moment, as that he lived in continual fear; for the expelling thereof by any kind of means, he determined by death to despatch his nephews, because so long as thay lived he could never be out of hazard, wherefore he sent warrant to Robert Brackenbury, etc."*

Again, whereas, More says that, owing to the King's reticence, many were in doubt whether they had died or not, Polydore Vergil represents Richard as released from anxiety by the generally known fact of their death. "King Richard, delivered by this fact from his care and fear, kept his slaughter not long secret." He took pains, he continues, to spread the knowledge of their death in the hope that the people would, "with better mind and goodwill bear and sustain his govern-

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 187.

ment," when they knew that no male issue of Edward IV. remained alive. But, he adds, and here he is in agreement with all the chroniclers, "when the fame of this notable foul act was dispersed through the realm, so great grief struck generally to the hearts of all men, that the same subduing all fear, they wept everywhere." *

The murder of the Princes is at best a probable solution of an insoluble mystery. It is an hypothesis with no better foundation than the fact that their disappearance was never satisfactorily accounted for. The supposed discovery of their remains, two centuries later, in a spot to which tradition pointed, and which might well have been selected for the purpose of concealing crime, lent support to the hypothesis, but was inconsistent with the confession of Dighton. But Richard's complicity in the crime is an historical assumption. It is, moreover, an assumption founded upon an assumption: *if* Richard had been unscrupulous enough to remove those who were the Princes' natural protectors, he would not hesitate to remove them. But surely it is equally true that, *if* Richard was capable of this crime, he would have proceeded to rid himself of the Princesses, whose title to the Crown took precedence of that of any collateral males. Sir George Buck says there is "certain proof" that the Princes were both living in the following February, and in support of this statement he appeals to the Records of Parliament, *Anno* I. Richard III.,† and Horace Walpole concludes that one, at least, of them was living after the accension of Henry VII.

"The alleged confession"—of Dighton and Tyrell—he says,

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 189.

† Buck, in Kennett, p. 552. I am bound to add that I do not find this certain proof in the Rolls of Parliament.

"was not publicly made, as Sir James Tirrel was suffered to live; but was shut up in the Tower, and put to death afterwards for we know not what treason. What can we believe but that Dighton was some low, mercenary wretch, hired to assume the guilt of a crime he had not committed, and that Sir James Tirrel never did, never would confess what he had not done; and was therefore put out of the way on a fictitious imputation? It must be observed too, that no inquiry was made into the murder on the accession of Henry VII., the natural time for it, when the passions of men were heated. . . . No mention of such a murder was made in the very Act of Parliament that attainted Richard himself, and which would have been the most heinous aggravation of his crimes. And no prosecution of the supposed assassins was even thought of till eleven years afterwards, on the appearance of Perkin Warbeck. Tirrel is not named in the act of attainder, to which I have had recourse; and such omissions cannot but induce us to surmise that Henry had never been certain of the death of the Princes, nor ever interested himself to prove that both were dead, till he had great reason to believe that one of them was alive." *

It is further worthy of observation, as shewing that the fact of the murders was questioned by those who were the best informed, that in the following February, at a great assemblage of the clergy, hereafter to be referred to, Richard was addressed not only as "a most catholic prince," but as one of "a most noble and blessed disposition in all

* "Historic Doubts," pp. 58–9.

things." After the fullest allowance is made for the obsequiousness in which all classes—and the clergy before all—were accustomed to approach their sovereign, such words, uttered at a time when reports of the murder were rife, when every humane heart in England was echoing the cry "where are the children?" and by men such as Cardinal Bourchier, Alcock, Bishop of Worcester, and Russell, Bishop of Lincoln, are not without significance. They become, says Sharon Turner, a kind of sacred testimony to Richard's character; "it must either have been a phrase of the most consummate hypocrisy, or must be allowed to counterbalance in no small degree the defamation that has pursued him." *

Two things may be regarded as tolerably certain—that Richard had no intention of perpetrating this crime when he left London, and that the Princes disappeared about the time of his visit to York. It has been plausibly suggested that this matchless villany was suddenly and rashly resolved upon by Richard on hearing of the conspiracies, which were unquestionably on foot, for the liberation of the Princesses.

In relation to them we know the course which he pursued. He gave a commission to John Nesfield to guard the Sanctuary, to watch all the approaches to the abbey, and suffer no one to approach or depart without reference to him. The plot to which the Queen-mother had lent her sanction was thus defeated. It had been well for the King had he been more suspicious, and adopted similar precautions in regard to the Princes. But after the death of Hastings, and so long as the Queen remained in sanctuary, this may well have seemed unnecessary.

* Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 571.

Attempts have been made to deduce presumptive evidence of Richard's guilt from an alleged coalition between the Yorkist and Lancastrian barons. Their feuds, it is said, were forgotten in the universal horror inspired by the perpetration of the greatest crime in history. This is one of those broad assertions which are too often believed only because of the effrontery with which they are made. When we come to examine it, the coalition is practically a myth. Lord Stanley's loyalty to the House of York, and to Richard, was so staunch that, as we have seen, his intriguing wife, when taken prisoner in Buckingham's rebellion, was consigned to his charge. And if he wavered at the last, it was only when the ties of nature asserted their supremacy, when the sword that supported Richard would be unsheathed against his own house, when he believed Richard to have been the executioner of his son, and when the King's cause was already lost. The Blounts were a Yorkist family. But Lord Mountjoy, and his brother, Sir James Blount, were connected with Buckingham and the Earl of Richmond, and political claims were subordinated to those of family. In the eagerness to show that Richard was at this time forsaken by the supporters of his house, Sir Thomas St. Leger has been claimed as a Yorkist on the ground of his marriage with Richard's sister, the Duchess of Exeter. This is an assumption for which no warrant can be adduced. The Duchess had been formerly married *to a violent Lancastrian,* and there is evidence that the political principles of her second husband did not differ from those of her first.*

* Sir Thomas St. Leger's only surviving child had been contracted to marry Thomas Gray, son of the Marquis of Dorset, for the purpose of securing her great inheritance to the rapacious Woodvilles. Richard annulled the Act of

The Berkleys were the only Yorkist family of distinction who changed sides, and in their case also the motive was non-political. With the Howards they were descended from the daughter of Thomas, first Duke of Norfolk, and their alienation was the result of jealousy at the elevation of another branch of the family.* It was Edward IV. who first estranged them from his House by his proposal to marry Anne, the heiress of the Duke of Norfolk, to his infant son Richard, Duke of York.†

Thus all the evidence, by which ingenious rather than ingeunous writers have sought to implicate Richard in a diabolical crime, fails to establish the primary fact that the Princes were put to death. The evidence adduced is inferential and contradictory; so far as it has any value it tends rather to establish the fact of Richard's innocence, and to suggest that at least one of the Princes died a natural death. It is, indeed, by no means improbable that the Duke of York, whose delicate health had excited his mother's worst fears, may have died in the interval between his leaving sanctuary and his uncle's coronation.‡

History abhors a mystery as nature does a vacuum. It is not to be expected that the historian of an age which has left few records should be able to give a full and satisfactory solu-

Parliament by which the Crown had renounced its title in order that the Queen's grandson might become Duke of Exeter. "Grants of Edward V.," p. 66.

* See Laing's "Appendix to Henry," p. 428.

† "Rot. Parl.," vol. vi., p. 169. William Lord Berkeley was created Earl of Nottingham by Edward IV. in 1480. He left no issue by three wives. The fickleness of his character is shewn in the fact that he took offence at his brother's marriage and bequeathed Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire with all his lands to Henry VII. See Bailey's "Nottinghamshire," vol. i., p. 337.

‡ See p. 50, *note.*

tion of every difficulty. A tentative judgment is often all that he can or should offer, and it will frequently happen that only after many failures the real solution can be arrived at. Meanwhile, upon a matter of history obscured by conflicting evidence, our judgments must be formed by tests taken from a general knowledge of mankind, and not alone from that special knowledge of individuals which we derive from history, and which is at the best imperfect. The speculations of four hundred years have failed to resolve the mystery of the disappearance of the sons of Edward IV., and the historian of to-day, equally with Sir Thomas More, must rest his conclusions upon more or less doubtful facts, or upon assumptions which will not command universal acceptance. Yet each new suggestion, if supported by reasonable arguments, tends to further the cause of harmony and historical truth. To me it seems that assumptions which have hitherto taken the place of evidence, are neither the most plausible, nor consistent with ascertained and authenticated facts. It may, indeed, be said without exaggeration that, for the most part, they have been wrecked on the granite rocks of fact. To suggest another is to court the censure of every reader who is satisfied with the verdict which history has passed upon the unpopular king. If no real difficulty is felt to exist, it follows that no solution is needed, and critics will not give due weight to arguments of which the relevancy is disputed. If, however, it is admitted that solutions heretofore offered are defective, it cannot be considered rash to seek another, provided that it carries a greater weight of probability, and is in admitted harmony with the best authenticated facts.

To a mind unbiassed by the accretions of fiction and

prejudice, several plausible hypotheses might occur, neither inconsistent with ascertained facts, nor unsupported by the best accredited contemporary rumours. For instance, Queen Elizabeth objected to surrender the Duke of York because he was "delicate." When pressed by Cardinal Bourchier she further objected that he was "ill," and that if he died, suspicion would fall upon his uncle. Now all the stories of Perkin Warbeck agree in this, that *one only of the Princes escaped.* We know that Elizabeth was supposed to entertain the design of removing the Duke of York out of the kingdom. If her fears had been realised, and the Duke of York had died, would she have been less concerned to secure the escape of Edward V.? We have seen that the section of the council which included her friends, were in the habit of meeting at the Tower. If with their contrivance, or that of Brackenbury, or both, the young King's escape was effected, it would explain two perplexing enigmas: the Queen's subsequent reconciliation with Richard, and his silence respecting the disappearance of the Princes. For, if one of them had died a natural death in the Tower, and he was unable to account for the other, he may well have hesitated to expose himself to suspicion by giving publicity to the facts.

But of the several possible solutions of this mystery, there is one which has always appeared to me the most probable, as it has been the most neglected. Richard was now the elected and covenanted King, with a parliamentary title which it was open to a regularly constituted parliament to dispute. The disaffection of Buckingham was known, though the King himself appears to have thought it transient. He might any day be a rebel in arms. The Duke of Brittany

persisted in his refusal to surrender Henry Tudor. By her marriage with Lord Stanley, Margaret Beaufort had re-animated the hopes of the Lancastrians. A renewal of the civil war was imminent. With Buckingham at their head, the Lancastrians would be both united and formidable, whilst the Yorkists were divided in their attachment to Richard and the children of Edward IV. Thus the royal prisoners, help-less and innocent as they were, and notwithstanding that the High Court of Parliament had declared them illegitimate, constituted the greatest danger to the stability of Richard's throne. Whilst, in the north, the King was receiving demonstrations of loyalty and attachment, in London and the southern counties his enemies were busy, and disquieting reports were in circulation. The nation cared much more for a settled government than for the interests of either dynasty, and their attachment to Richard had its root in the conviction that he alone could cope with the prevalent distractions. Thus we find that Sir Thomas Vaughan of Tretower, a staunch adherent of Edward IV., transferred his services to Richard. In a Welsh ode by Lewis Glyn Cottie, the reason is assigned.

"Strong was he at the head of battalions, twice nine valiant guards, with King Edward ; and (strong) after him to keep the rose with Richard, by the sharpness of his dart. King Richard, he warmly judged, is the strong, fat bull of the towers of York. Dare any man to-day (tusky boar that he is) dare any host, from Exeter, or from England, move him ? Is there a wild Irishman, officer or host, who does not tremble (before him) crowned monarch that he is ?" *

* Quoted by Mr. Gairdner. "Richard III.," p. 171.

It was Richard's misfortune to be served by men even less scrupulous than himself—men such as Lovell, Catesby, "a great instrument of Richard's crimes," * and Ratcliffe, "a proper instrument in the hands of that tyrant," †—vain, grasping, tyrannical men, whose every act was inspired by self-interest. The popular estimate of these men was expressed in the doggrel rhyme which William Colynbourne, a Wiltshire gentleman, caused to be posted on the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral a fortnight after the coronation.

> The cat, the rat, and Lovell, the dog,
> Rule all England under the Hog. ‡

What more likely than that one of these creatures should, during the King's progress to York, anticipate his supposed wishes, and make away with the royal Princes either by death or by transportation? § Such a plan would receive powerful support in London, and would probably be connived at by Brackenbury. If successfully carried out, it would be a masterly, if a rash bid for the royal favour, and might well justify itself to a perverted conscience as an act at once of loyalty, patriotism, and far-sighted statecraft. It would also explain what is one of the most incomprehensible incidents of the story—Richard's determined silence in reference to the reports that the Princes had met with a violent death. We know that Ratcliffe, "a man of desperate courage and forward to promote Richard's designs, bold in mischief, as far from pity

* Hume, vol. iii., p. 295. † *Ibid.*, p. 272.

‡ The reference is of course to Richard's cognizance, the Tusked Boar.

§ "Some," says Buck, "say confidently the young Princes were embarked in a ship at the Tower wharf, and conveyed from thence to sea; so cast into the black deeps; others aver they were not drowned, but set safe on shore beyond seas."

as from all fear of God," * was in London. He it was who had brought 5,000 soldiers from the north to overawe the city, the Protector having given him "in charge to despatch divers things by the way" †—one of which was the execution of Rivers, Gray, and Vaughan. Lingard calls him "the ruffian, who had murdered the prisoners at Pontefract." He had been one of the two esquires appointed to wait upon Henry VI. at the time of his death, for which he was morally responsible, and may have been the actual agent in inflicting. Nor is there anything improbable in the supposition that the Duke of Buckingham may have suborned him to perpetrate this greater crime. Neither Catesby nor Ratcliffe could be aware of the contemplated rebellion of the crafty and inconstant Duke. It will be remembered that Buckingham claimed to be aware of the murder of the Princes at least three days before the date of Tyrell's alleged commission, assigning it as the reason of his disaffection to the King. "For the which, and other causes," says Fabyan, "had within the breast of the Duke of Buckingham," he conspired against him.‡ The fellow-conspirators, who were in his confidence, were Morton and the Countess of Richmond. Now there is a remarkable passage in Buck, in which he says: "An old manuscript which I have seen says that *Dr. Morton and a certain Countess, contriving the death of King Edward* and others, resolved it by poison." Without attaching too much importance to this story, it is worthy of more credit than that of More, who in one place says it was doubted whether, in King Richard's days, the Princes were

* More's Works, p. 57.
† Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 184.
‡ Fabyan, p. 670.

made away or not, and in another that Tyrell and Dighton were their murderers; now, that Richard sent a messenger from Warwick to order their assassination by Brackenbury, and again that Buckingham had certain knowledge of their death three days before the King reached Warwick.

If, through the agency of Ratcliffe, who was hated by the people, Buckingham could so commit Richard in the eyes of an indignant public, he was putting a trump card in the hands of the Lancastrians which they would know how to play. And they did it in that ballad which has come down to our own time, and is probably immortal—"The Babes in the Wood."*

Morton, by his escape in disguise when he was a guest in the confidence of the Duke rather than his prisoner at Brecknock, betrayed his knowledge of the double game that Buckingham was playing, and his sense of his own insecurity. Dr. Laing says that King Richard, when at Oxford, *released* Morton at the request of the University.† If this were so, it explains Buckingham's leaving the King at Gloucester for the purpose of carrying out the royal clemency. This, however, would have been fatal to his ambitious designs, in the execution of which he required the Bishop's co-operation.‡ If he was the bearer of the royal pardon, he certainly failed to communicate it; and the fact of Morton's escape would alone suggest a knowledge, on his part, that the Duke was awaiting

* Appendix E. † Laing's "Appendix to Henry," vol. xii., p. 416.

‡ In the true tragedy of Richard III. Buckingham is represented as soliloquising: "Ah, Buckingham, thou plaidst thy part and made him King, and put the lawfull heires besides. Why then is Buckingham guilty now of his death? *Yet had not the bishop of Ely fled I had escaped.*"—HAZLITT's *Shakspeare*, Lib. v., p. 100.

the issue of some diabolical scheme, and a fear that, if it failed, he himself might be sacrificed.

Again, the Duke's anxiety for an interview with Richard before his execution may be explained by a hope of pardon on making confession of the murder of the Princes. It is certain that, with or without knowledge of the fact, he had disseminated a report of the murder, probably with a view of rendering the insurrection popular, and of justifying the transference of the crown to Henry Tudor.* Nor was Ratcliffe the only instrument ready to the hand of Buckingham in the perpetration of crime. Catesby was "to the manner born." † More informs us that he had the custody of the prisoners at Pontefract, and presided at their execution. The fact is not without significance that when, eighteen months later, Richard was said to have contemplated marrying the Princess Elizabeth, the only men who ventured to oppose his will were Ratcliffe and Catesby. If Richard conciliated the Woodvilles by practically annulling the Act by which the children of Edward IV. had been bastardised, who could forecast the result? The murder of the Princes would assume grave importance when all parties agreed in regarding them as Edward's legal heirs, and the actual perpetrators of the crime could hardly escape its merited punishment. May not this explain the boldness and determination with which Ratcliffe and Catesby warned Richard of the consequences of the marriage, and prevailed upon him to abandon it?

* Laing's "Appendix to Henry," p. 428.

† Catesby was the owner of the estate of Free-Warren in Warwickshire. Through his attainder this manor escheated to the crown. It is not a little suggestive to find that, together with the rest of his forfeited lands, it was restored to his son by a special Act of Parliament in II. Henry VII. See Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," p. 222.

Excommunication, rebellion, and a charge of being accessory to the death of the Princes were threatened. And the curious thing is that one so little likely as Richard to be influenced by the arguments, threats, or solicitations of others, did yield to them.* Yet a few years later we find Ratcliffe espousing the cause of Perkin Warbeck, and fighting and dying in defence of the alleged "legal heir" of Edward IV. Why this change of tactics? The Stanleys were consistent in their attachment to the family of the late King. But such tergiversation on the part of Sir Richard Ratcliffe suggests some motive deeper than enmity to Henry VII., and would be explained by the desire to escape suspicion of complicity in the murder of the Princes, by professing to believe in the identity of Perkin Warbeck as one of them.

In any case Brackenbury, as the legal custodian of the Princes, must have been a voluntary or involuntary party to the plot by which their removal was effected. All the weight of this consideration favours the theory of their escape, or of death from natural causes; for it is difficult to believe that the "gentle Brackenbury" † could have even indirectly sanctioned violence. At the same time the substantial rewards which he received from Richard III., including lands of the late Lord Rivers, seem to point to service rendered upon which history is silent.

It has been said that, had Richard been guiltless of the murder of his nephews, he would not have allowed the stigma to be attached to his name at home and in foreign courts; that had they died a natural death evidence was forthcoming,

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 499.
† Turpyn's "Chronicle of Calais."

or if they were still living they would have been produced, as, a few years later, when suspected of the murder of Edward, Earl of Warwick, Henry VII. caused him to be conducted on a Sunday "through the principal streets of London to be seen by the people."* This argument may have some weight in its bearing upon the question of the Princes being still alive; but on the above assumption it was no longer possible for Richard, powerful as he was, to disavow a creature like Ratcliffe or Catesby who, however obnoxious to the people, however steeped in crime and intrigue, had been the executors of their sovereign's will, and the confidants of his most secret purposes. To strike at one of these vile sycophants was to strike at all; to excite a storm of rancour and blood-thirsty revenge, against which a man with cleaner hands than Richard might find it hard to stand when already condemned by the popular voice.

In the position of doubt and uncertainty even as to the death of the Princes, Henry VII., for reasons that are perfectly intelligible, excited public opinion by examinations and the publication of alleged confessions of menials who, if guilty, he was bound to punish. Brackenbury was then dead, Catesby had expiated his life of crime upon the scaffold,† Miles Forrest, "a fellow fleshed in murder," died shortly after the perpetration of his alleged crime; Ratcliffe, also, had fallen in the cause of Perkin Warbeck. The inquiry was a mockery, but it produced a clamour for vengeance upon the perpetrators of the crime which Henry had no intention of gratifying. On

* Bacon, in Kennett, vol. i., p. 585.

† Catesby's betrayal of Hastings was one of the most odious and calculating crimes on record, prompted by the hope that the ruin and death of his generous patron would be his own making. See More, p. 493.

the contrary the self-convicted murderer who "spake best for the king" was pardoned and restored to liberty. "It may be thought," says Sir George Buck, "such strange clemency and impunity proceeded from a singular high indulgence, or else those examinations and confessions were but buzzes and quaint devices to amaze the people and entertain them with expectation of a justice to be done in some more convenient time—which was never."* His purpose was to brand for ever the memory of Richard with this diabolical crime, and he shrank not from the infamy of extending his protection to the perjured villain whose testimony could be used for this purpose.

There is absolutely no evidence that Henry VII. did not find both Princes alive in the Tower. "There be certain proof," says Buck, "that the Princes were both living in the month of February following the death of their father, which was ten months after. . . . And this is plain in the Records of Parliament, Anno I. Richard III., where there is mention made of this Prince (Edward V.) as then living.† If Sir George Buck's inference is correct, the probability that the Princes survived their uncle is very strong, and in that case the treatment of Edward, Earl of Warwick, by Henry VII., opens the door to surmises as plausible as any by which the guilt of their blood has been attributed to Richard III. If, however, the fact of the murder of the Princes is held to be established, there is not a particle of trustworthy or even plausible evidence to incriminate Richard. That he was ignorant of their fate can hardly be questioned, whilst his

* Buck, in Kennett, p. 559.

† Buck, p. 552. As I have already observed Buck's inference is open to question.

reconciliation with their mother and sisters is evidence that, whatever that fate may have been, *they* held him guiltless. Since then, in any attempt to fix the stigma of this crime upon an individual, we have no other guide than conjecture, supported by reasonable probability; every ascertained fact countenances the theory that not Richard, but the Duke of Buckingham may have been the principal, and not Tyrell, but Ratcliffe, an accessory in the murder or transportation of the royal youths.

The question whether the skeletons discovered in the reign of Charles II. were the actual remains of the two Princes is one upon which a conclusive answer will probably never be possible. The assumption that they were such is based upon conjecture as vague as a much earlier discovery recorded by Sir George Buck. The bones of a child being found in a high turret, "that turret being reckoned a vast and damned place for height and hard access, nobody in many years looking into it," were supposed to be the bones of one of these Princes, and, so far, to favour the report of the escape of the Duke of York. They were afterwards shown to be the skeleton of an aged ape which had escaped from the menagerie, and being too feeble to retrace his steps had died from starvation.

Two obvious considerations should have sufficed to prevent the stamp of authority from being given by Charles II. to the alleged identity of these human remains with those of the two Princes. As is well known, that monarch caused them to be placed in a white marble sarcophagus, inscribed to the memory of the Princes, and deposited in Westminster Abbey, where they still rest in the south aisle of Henry VII.'s Chapel. In the first place, after an interment of two centuries, in the

damp soil below the level of the Thames, it was well-nigh impossible that either the skeletons or the "elm chest" in which they were enclosed, should remain intact; or that the remains, after being mutilated by the workmen, who, "not being sensible of what they had in hand, cast the rubbish and them away together; wherefore they were caused to shift the rubbish, and by that means preserved all the bones,"* should be recognisable as the remains of two boys of precisely the required ages. But again, the Tower was a State prison in which Lollards and criminals had been confined, those who died being buried within its precincts; whilst, during the Plague in 1665, burials without coffins, or with any substitute that came to hand, was a matter of daily occurrence in the City.† The discovery of such remains was therefore not a matter to occasion surprise, and the skeletons, that have found a resting place in Westminster Abbey, are more probably those of two menials of the Tower than of the sons of Edward IV.

We are not told in what part of the Tower the young Princes were lodged, but from the consideration with which we know that the Protector treated them we may conclude that it would be in the royal apartments in the White Tower. "Is it to be supposed, whatever might have been the Protector's design as to the ultimate fate of his nephews, that the Princes were not lodged in royal apartments, and paid all the respect due to their rank? Is it likely that Richard would have had

* Sandford, Book v., p. 404.

† "The Tower was both a palace and a State prison, the receptacle of Lollards, heretics, and criminals, within which those who died by disease or violence were always buried;—the discovery therefore of bones is neither surprising, nor perhaps uncommon."—LAING'S *Appendix to Henry*, p. 419.

them shut up in the dark and wretched dwelling of one of the porters of the gates? If he had wanted in humanity, would policy have dictated such a course? No; it must at once have betrayed some foul design, without adding a jot to the facility of the perpetration." * Where, then, were these remains found? Sandford, who professes to write on the authority of an eye-witness of their discovery, says: "The lodgings of the Princes being in *the building near the water-gate*, which is therefore to this day called the Bloody Tower, their bodies *were buried in the stair-foot there*, somewhat deep in the ground." Tradition has ever since associated this tower with the reputed murder. But the tower in question did not receive this appellation until upwards of a century after the disappearance of the Princes. The very epithet itself "seems to be the sole origin of a rumour which gained strength in consequence of certain peculiarities in its structure appearing to coincide with Sir Thomas More's description." † As late as the reign of Henry VIII., it was known as the Garden Tower. When, in 1597, it was first designated the Bloody Tower, the fortress was crowded by delinquents of all descriptions, and it "probably derived its present name from some of the horrid deeds which distinguished that era." ‡

The tradition that the bones were found under the staircase of the Bloody Tower, over the entrance gate, is without foundation. They were found on the south side of the White Tower, and at the foot of the staircase which leads to the chapel in that building.§ This, it may be said, does not

* Bayley's "Tower," vol. i., p. 264.

† Miss Halford's "Richard III.," vol. ii., p. 220.

‡ Bayley, vol. i., p. 264.

§ "Miss Halford," vol. ii., p. 222. See also Bayley's "Tower," vol. i., p. 262.

invalidate the story of More and Bacon. The stairs leading "from the King's lodgings to the chapel in the said Tower" is certainly a far more likely spot to have been chosen by the murderers. But it must be remembered that the two Chancellors agree in saying that the Princes were first interred under the stairs, a place which Richard considered "too base for them that were King's children," and afterwards removed by his order, "to a less vile corner; whereupon, another night, by the King's warrant renewed, their bodies were removed by the priest of the Tower, and buried by him in some place which (by means of the priest's death soon after) could not be known." * This can only mean that, consistently with his habitual regard for the religious observances of his time, Richard had them buried in consecrated ground near at hand. To suppose that his requirement would be met by removing them from under the stairs in the White Tower, to a similar position in another tower of less dignity is absurd. The conclusion is obvious, that, if the Chancellors' story is true, the remains found "under the stairs" are not those of the Princes; or, if they be, that the story, upon the strength of which Richard has for four centuries been held guilty of parricide, is a fabrication.

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* Sandford, Book v., p. 404. † Bacon. Henry VII., p. 608.

CHAPTER III.

It must now have become evident to Richard that his desire to reign in the hearts of his subjects would not be realised. In proof of this we find him requiring the sheriffs of several counties to administer the oath of allegiance to the whole population. From this time his aim was to control rather than to lead men, his strength of will now degenerated into obstinacy and severity. The Plantagenet Kings had commonly deemed their prerogative above law; and when the Government was regulated by no fixed maxims, when the people enjoyed no defined and undisputed rights, it was little marvel if their liberties were encroached upon. On the other hand, Richard's services to the State were forgotten in the execration of his alleged crimes, and of the severity with which he had crushed the rebellion.

Morton had escaped to Flanders, where he maintained a correspondence with his friends in England, some of the Privy Councillors of the King being amongst the number. The curses which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Queen Margaret were most literally fulfilled:

> Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st,
> And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends.

The Corporation of London, with horsemen clad in velvet, might offer him loyal welcome to the Metropolis. Richard

knew that the loyalty was feigned, and the distrust was mutual. That sense of security, for the sake of which his seizure of the crown had been condoned, was gone. The country was virtually in a state of siege. The officers at every port were forbidden to allow any person, native or alien, to take ship without special licence from the King.

Much stress has been laid on the fact that Richard challenged the right of sanctuary. But this was done quite as much for commercial as for political reasons; the citizens of London were loud in their complaints of the abuse of sanctuary, and supplied the King with a valid pretence for the restriction of its privileges. It is forgotten by those who, in this matter, have sought to attach the stigma of tyranny to Richard, that within three years Henry VII. obtained a bull from Pope Innocent to qualify these privileges, especially in relation to political refugees, whilst Edward IV., without appealing to papal authority, had not hesitated to seize and bring to justice sanctuary persons. Many instances might be given of the gross abuse of the privileges of sanctuary which not only justified but demanded the intervention of the King. The college of St. Martin-le-Grand, situated in St. Martin's Lane, within Aldersgate, is said to have been founded in the year 700, by Wythred, King of Kent. It enjoyed the Saxon immunities of sak, sok, and tol, privileges which William the Conqueror confirmed, and his successors renewed. By these sovereigns it was also exempted from "all other jurisdiction, temporal or spiritual, regal or papal, and assigned all the privileges of sanctuary."* Hence, situated as it was beyond

* Hook's "Archbishops," vol. v., p. 273.

the jurisdiction of the mayors and sheriffs of London, it became the resort of foreigners who could there follow their occupations without incurring the disabilities imposed by the City of London. In 1426, or 1427, Thomas Bourchier was appointed to the important office of Dean of this magnificent church, the situation of which, as a sanctuary, placed it in the front rank of metropolitan churches. The Dean and Chapter afforded sanctuary to all who sought their protection, irrespective of sex, class, character, or nationality. Such privileges invited abuse, and about the time of Bourchier's appointment one of so gross a nature occurred as to create a general desire for the abolition, or at least the curtailment, of the rights of sanctuary. As the City guard were conducting a criminal—one of those discharged soldiers who were the terror of the community both in town and country—from Newgate to Guildhall, he was rescued by five comrades. Pursued by the guard the six ruffians sought refuge in the precincts of St. Martin's. Here they were captured by the sheriffs who carried them to Newgate in chains. Jealous of their rights, the Dean and Chapter prosecuted the sheriffs, the ruffians were restored to sanctuary, and so escaped to wage further warfare upon the community. If it was an act of tyranny to challenge the exercise of rights so prejudicial to morality and the public weal, Richard was a tyrant.

To this period belongs the foundation of those fortresses which owe their origin to the introduction of gunpowder in warfare. Richard had a taste for building, and he spared neither trouble nor expense in procuring the best materials. Whilst resting at Nottingham in August he had planned the completion of the works at the castle, particularly the erection

of a strong tower on the western side of the fortress rendering it the strongest and most magnificent in the kingdom.*

The ruins of Penrith Castle bear their silent witness to that sense of insecurity which induced the King to construct a powerful fortress in the midst of the forest of Englewood. Occupying an elevated site above the town, on the borders of Westmoreland and Cumberland, it stood a menace to Scotland, whilst the Tees, the Tyne, and Solway Firth would instantly reflect its beacon fire. Hall graphically describes this method of mediæval telegraphy. "The custom is," he says, "especially in time of war, on every high hill or high place, to erect a beacon with a great lantern in the top, which may be seen and discerned a great space off. And when the noise is once bruited that the enemies approach . . . they suddenly put fire to the lanterns and make shouts and outrages from town to town and from village to village. Some run in post from place to place, admonishing the people to be ready to resist the jeopardy and defend the peril. And by this policy the fame is soon blown to every city and town, inasmuch that as well the citizens as the rural people be in short space assembled and armed to repel and put back the new arrived enemies."†

> Belvoir's lonely terraces the sign to Lincoln sent,
> And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale of Trent;
> Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's embattled pile,
> And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle.

Penrith Castle was probably the first stronghold that was constructed to resist the new element in warfare introduced by Edward IV. The walls are five feet in thickness, an outer casement of stone being filled in with rubble. The south

* Bailey's "Nottinghamshire," vol. i., p. 340. † Hall's "Chronicle," p. 409.

wall with its deep embrasured windows remains intact. The fosse may also be traced; but an arched vault at the north-east angle is all that remains to tell of the horrors of the dungeon, over which might have been inscribed the words of Dante: "Leave hope behind all ye who enter here."

The closing months of the year were employed in hunting out the rebels in the south, whose lands and property were confiscated and distributed amongst those whose fidelity was either proved or desired. Many of the Kentish men had deserted their rebel leaders after the disaster which befell the Earl of Richmond's expedition. It was important to secure their loyalty, and with this object in view Richard, who had great faith in his personal influence, visited Canterbury. A few days before this visit a proclamation was published in Kent, offering a pardon to those misguided subjects who had been seduced into revolt, and rewards for the arrest of their leaders. The harbouring of these was prohibited, and the proclamation continues: "The King's Highness is fully determined to see due administration of justice throughout this his realm to be had, and to reform, punish, and subdue all extortions and oppressions in the same. And for that cause with all that at his coming now into this his said county of Kent, that every person dwelling within the same that find him grieved, oppressed, or unlawfully wronged, do make a bill of his complaint, and put it to his highness, and he shall be heard, and without delay have such convenient remedy as shall accord with his laws; for his grace is utterly determined that all his true subjects shall live in rest and quiet, and peaceably enjoy their lands, livelodes, and goods, according to the laws of this, his land, which they be naturally born to inherit." The proclama-

tion concludes with the enactment of pains and penalties upon those who should "rob, hurt, or spoil any of his said subjects," death being the penalty for such as should "pick or contrive any quarrel to other for any old or new rancour"!

The Harleian Manuscripts afford numerous proofs that if it had become Richard's aim, as we have said, to control rather than to lead men, he yielded to the necessities of his position—not to a love of autocratic power. Illustrations abound of the energy and success with which he applied himself to check corruption, and to secure efficiency as well as economy in the service of the State. Thus, on the King's return from the West, a warrant was issued at Winchester, on the 22nd of November, to the Keeper of the Privy Seal, to discharge one Richard Bell, who had been admitted to an office of the Privy Seal "by means of giving great gifts, and other sinister and ungodly ways, in great discouraging of the under-clerks, which have long continued therein to have the experience of the same, to see a stranger, never brought up in the said office, to put them by of their promotion." A meritorious public servant was promoted to the vacant office. Robert Belman was nominated by the King "for the good and diligent service done by the said Robert in the said office, and specially in this the King's great journey, and for his experience and long continuance in the same." Vested interests were respected, but the abuse of patronage was checked by providing that "no more clerks shall be admitted in the said office unto the time the said office shall be reduced to the number ordered and stablished in the days of King Edward the Third." *

* Harl. MSS., No. 433, fol. 123 b.

Integrity is a common-place virtue; but it was not always displayed by the Plantagenets. In view of the reiterated insinuations of his detractors, it is necessary to say that it was practised as well as inculcated by Richard III. One of many illustrations of this trait in the King's character belongs to this visit to the west. Amongst the confiscated property of Sir Thomas St. Leger, was some valuable plate which had been pledged to him by the Abbot of Malmsbury. By a reasonable fine, Richard allowed the Abbot to redeem the convent plate, and in the following February a warrant was issued to the Lord Mayor, in whose custody it was vested, for its restoration to the convent.*

By an organised system of peculation and fraud, of favouritism, and chicanery, a large portion of the royal revenues was diverted from the exchequer. To meet this growing evil, Richard issued an ordinance of a very comprehensive nature, regulating the appointment of officers, the registration of his numerous lordships, the collection of their revenues, and providing for the removal of ascertained abuses. One passage from this lengthy document may be quoted as illustrating the King's appreciation of learning:

"Where that lordes, knightes, and esquiers, many of them not lettered, bene made stewardes of the Kinges livelod in diverse countres, thay, taking gret fynes and rewardes of the Kinges tenantes to their propre use, to the Kinges hurt and poveresshinge of his said tenantes, and also wanting cunnyng and discrecion to ordre and directe the said lyvelode lawfully, with many moo inconvenientes. Therfor it is thoughte that

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 149.

lerned men in the lawe where most profitable to be stewardes of the said livelod for many causes concernyng the Kinges profite and the wele of his tenantes." *

Not the least of the judicious and benevolent acts by which Richard sought to secure the welfare of his subjects was the abolition of the last vestige of domestic slavery, so far, at least, as concerned the royal demesnes. Whether the abolition of villeinage was an unmixed social gain is a question which we cannot here discuss. It is certainly inaccurate to represent it as the source of pauperism, laws for the regulation of which are found in the Rolls of Parliament more than a century before Richard's time. It rather tended to supply a social want which pressed seriously upon agriculture, viz., a scarcity of labour, which, in England, is without a parallel.† Nor had the freedmen a choice between honest wage-earning labour, and voluntary pauperism, since in these halcyon days *giving to beggars* was prohibited equally with begging.‡ It is probable that they were not wholly divorced from the soil, as *landless labourers* were then almost non-existent. The rural population consisted of freemen who tilled their own land, subject only to light feudal dues, and with such the freed villeins took equal rank. Not only had they their own plots of land, they also derived advantage from the enormous tracks of common land which were free and open to all. They thus constituted a free and prosperous society, the retainers, indeed,

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 84.

† See "Quarterly Review," vol. clvii., p. 265.

‡ "Because many valiant beggars, so long as they may live of begging, do refuse to labour, giving themselves to idleness and vice, and sometimes to other abominations, none shall not under colour of pity or alms, give anything to such which may labour."—*Statute of Labourers of* 1349.

of the feudal lords to whom they looked as their natural leaders alike in war and peace.* We may freely recognise the great advantage to the bulk of the people in this subdivision of the land, when meat was plentiful and corn and vegetables scarce, without committing ourselves to communistic theories inapplicable to a totally changed condition of things. Bnt they who see "the golden era of agricultural England" in the disappearance of villeinage and the creation of peasant proprietors of the soil, should award to Richard their tribute of admiration. It would, however, be more correct to designate the two last decades of the fifteenth century as "the golden age," of the English *labourer*.† With or without his allotment of land, the labourer commanded wages which, if we estimate them by the cost of the necessaries of life, were higher than at any previous or subsequent period. In vain were Acts of Parliament passed with a view to lower the rate of wages; the artisan continued to earn 6d., the common labourer, 4d. per day. It is true that both were liable to be pressed into the King's service, and deported from their homes for long and indefinite periods. Several such warrants have been preserved. They will be referred to hereafter; but in connection with Richard's activity in building we may here notice a commission issued early in the following year. It was directed to Thomas Daniel, who was instructed "to take and seize, for use within this realm, as many masons, bricklayers, and other workmen as should be thought necessary for the hasty expedition of the King's works within the

* "England for All," by H. M. Hyndman, chap. i.

† "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," by J. E. Thorold Rogers, M.P., p. 326.

Tower of London and Palace of Westminster."* Armed with so terrible a power, the King must have used it sparingly and considerately where there is no trace of its being resented by the class whose liberty it threatened.

By many acts of clemency and wisdom Richard sought to recover that popularity with his subjects which had now almost reached the vanishing point. Not the least important of these was the increase of the navy, though this again revealed the fact that the King acutely realised, as it is said that his subjects perceived, how "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." He had very early manifested a desire to relieve commerce of the hazards to which it was exposed by the buccaneering practices of the age. A copy of instructions for negotiations for the restitution of French prizes has been preserved, which possesses interest in this connection. An English ship having been captured off Boulogne, "to the gret hurt and prejudice of certain Englische merchauntes," two French ships at Sandwich were "put under arrest . . . at the sute and instance of the same merchauntes." Retaliation begat retaliation; and claims for restitution, though advanced by either country, were ignored, notwithstanding the truce between Edward IV. and Louis XI. But Richard took the French claims into serious consideration in the very first month of his reign. The terms of his instructions to the two Commissioners who, in July 1483, were sent to Boulogne to negotiate with Philippe de Cordes for mutual restitution of recent spoils, and for protection against the recurrence of such illegal seizures, must have convinced the Frenchman

‡ Stow's "Survey of London," vol. i., p. 79.

of the sincerity of the King's efforts. After setting forth the circumstances under which the French claims had been advanced, the instructions ran thus:

"And forasmoche as the said lord Cordes asketh . . . not onely restitucion of his shippes but also satisfaccion of his damages and interesse, &c., they shall fele to what summe the said damages and interesses woll amounte, and insist for the moderacion thereof as moche as they can. And when they have brought it as lowe as they may, shewing and allegging the gret damages and interesse whiche Englisshemen have borne and sustened by prinse and arrestes committed by the Frensche partie aganst them, shall assent that the said ij shippes with asmoche appareill as was in theim at the tyme of the arrest (and, where any thereof is lost, other as good to be provided therfor) shalbe restored by a certayn day . . . . provided and assented by the said lord Cordes or his deputees, how and by what day the persones, shippes and goodes of the realme of England taken and arrested in the realme of Fraunce shalbe delivered. In practesing wherof they shall, by as good discrecion as they can, insiste to have good suertee for the same deliveraunce. . . . And therupon, if it be asked, the said ij shippes of Fraunce arrested in the west contre shalbe promised and assured to be delivered. And as for other prises and takinges uppon the see of either partie, of England and of Fraunce, they shall speke that ther may be a diete appoincted betwene bothe Kinges for reformacion of alle attemptates, to be extended at more leyser, that the truex that yet endureth may be wele observed herafter. . . . And if nede be, they shalle apoinete an other diete for thexcencion of the premises or any part therof,

certifying from tyme to tyme with alle diligence the Kinges counsaill of suche defficultes and novelties as any shall happe to find in any of the premisses." *

A similar overture for mutual redress was made to Brittany. In the instructions delivered to Thomas Hutton the following singular passage occurs, which illustrates the popular belief that the death of the sovereign involved a suspension of the laws:

"Item, that how be it upon the hasty departyng of the said King (Edward IV.) out of this worlde diverse folkes of simple disposicion, peradventure supposing that the peas had be expired by the deth of the said King, felle to prinses and takinges upon the see, the oo partie ayenst the oder, to the gret trouble and hinderaunce of thentercours and fete of merchandises exercised by the subjettes of both the sides. Yet it is thought that by meanes of a diete to be sette betwene bothe princes a full reformacion of alle attemptates may wele be had; wherunto the King and the counsaills of England wilbe wele disposed, so that the duc wille for his part be of the same disposicion." †

The negotiations ended in the drawing up of protocols which neither France nor Brittany observed. Thus the issue of the King's efforts to preserve peace abroad, and to foster commerce at home was a universal distrust, which intensified the gloom of the expiring year. Christmas was, however, observed with that pomp and ceremony which were congenial to Richard's nature, and "designed to mark the stability of the King's possession of the throne." ‡ At the same hour the

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., pp. 19–20. † *Ibid.*, p. 22.
‡ Halsted, vol. ii., p. 291.

great Christian festival was being observed at Vannes where the Earl of Richmond was then residing. The refugees assembled to renew their oath of fealty to their chief, and to discuss their future plans. They met, we are told, in the church, where "they ratified all other things by plighting their troths and solemn covenants; and first of all, Earl Henry upon his oath promised that, as soon as he should be King, he would marry Elizabeth. . . . Then after they swore unto him homage, as though he had been already created king, protesting that they would lose not only their lands and possessions, but their lives before ever they would suffer, bear, or permit that Richard should rule over them and theirs." * They then proceeded in solemn state to the cathedral at Rennes where, before the high altar, Henry renewed that promise to marry the Princess Elizabeth, which had been made the condition of their support.

For this reunion of the confederates Richard was prepared; but he trusted to work upon the cupidity of the Duke of Brittany, and thus eventually to secure the surrender of Henry. Meanwhile his enemies abroad were a source of danger no less real than that disaffection at home, which he knew to be incurable. Sir Thomas Wentworth was commissioned to sweep the Channel, where Breton ships occasionally appeared. We read of the purchase of ships, native and foreign built, and of merchants subsidised "to do the King service on the sea against his enemies of France and Brittany." In neither court could Richard repose confidence. Louis XI., who, in his correspondence, had avoided the use of the titles of royalty, addressing Richard as "my lord and cousin," had on his

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 203.

death-bed refused to recognise him as King of England. He had ceased to pay the subsidy, which for seven years had purchased English neutrality in his quarrels with Burgundy and Brittany. He had failed to observe the convention for the cessation of piracy contracted at Boulogne in the previous July. This is shown in a letter addressed to him by Richard, on the 18th of August, in which the King complains that "the merchants of this my kingdom of England, seeing the great occasions given them by your subjects by taking vessels and merchandise and otherwise, doubt greatly to adventure themselves to go to Bordeaux and elsewhere in your obeisance, until they be assured on your part that they may surely and safely exercise the feat of their said merchandise in all the places of your said obeisance." * To this remonstrance Louis had turned a deaf ear, and the failure of Richard's persistent efforts to persuade or compel the Duke of Brittany to surrender Henry—which he attributed to the intrigues of Louis—had completed the estrangement between the courts of London and Paris before Buckingham's rebellion.

We have several evidences of Richard's diligent carefulness to preserve amicable relations with Brittany. Thus in September, 1483, Lord Dynham, in announcing the death of Louis XI. to the Lord Chancellor, writes, "It is thought here that the King should have a navie upon the see, to shewe him selff as a King of rule and kepe his stremes betwixt this and Dover, and that suche folkes as shalbe sent unto the see may have a strict charge upon their lyves that they nether robbe nor spoile any of the Kinges frendes, and namely, of the duc of Austriche contrees and Bretayne. For if they fall ennemys

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 34.

unto us and no grette suerte had betwixt the king our soverayn lord and theim, it shall not be good for this towne and marches, considered of likeliholde what pours the duc shalbe of nowe upon this victorie of Utright which is thought a gret thing here." *

Whilst Richard distrusted the Duke of Brittany he adopted and scrupulously enforced this conciliatory attitude. But the Duke, though claiming credit for refusing to surrender Henry to the French King, equally declined to surrender him to Richard. Professing amity, he yet harboured such dangerous English refugees as the Marquis of Dorset, Courtenay Bishop of Exeter, and Sir Edward Woodville. The occasion was seized by the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, who had reasons of his own for fomenting a quarrel between England and France, to force Richard into a triple alliance against France. He offered, in effect, to guarantee that a pledge should be obtained from the Duke of Brittany to discard the Earl of Richmond and his confederates. "Because the King may complain of that which has taken place in Brittany touching the person of the Earl of Richmond and of the other fugitives of the realm of England," his ambassadors shall confer with those of Brittany, "shewing them that if the Duke is content to leave the party of the said Earl of Richmond's fugitives, and no longer to support or have anything to do with them, my said lord will be the said Duke's pledge and surety of that which they shall be by him promised therein to the said King of England."†

Richard had before now gauged the value of the Duke of

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. ii., p. 29.
† *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Brittany's promises. Their currency would not be greatly enhanced by the guarantee of Maximilian. But Henry had outbid the King in promises, which the Duke, on his part, was perfectly willing to accept in spite of the protest of his minister Peter Laudois. Richard knew that nothing short of getting the Earl into his power could secure him against the conspiracy of which he was the head. To this end he instructed his ambassadors to address themselves to the Duke's powerful and crafty minister Laudois, offering him rich bribes in money. To the Duke they offered the profits arising from the Earl's estates in England, to which he laid claim. The needy Duke and the avaricious minister promised compliance. But Morton, informed by Kydwelly (Richard's Solicitor-General and trusted agent in Wales) of these negotiations, communicated them to Urwick, the Countess of Richmond's chaplain, who lived in Flanders.*

The only practical result of these negotiations, in which we see the Duke of Brittany at once bargaining with Richard, Maximilian, Charles VIII., and the Earl of Richmond, was, that the latter delivered himself out of his power. Under pretence of going a hawking he fled with ten or twelve followers to Charles VIII.† He was not missed until the fourth day after his flight, when Laudois, sending a band of soldiers to arrest and deliver him up to Richard, discovered that he was gone. The French Court heartily welcomed the fugitive, and none more so than the Dauphin Charles, and his sister Anne of Beaujeu, who was regent during Charles' minority.

No definite peace had been concluded with France; but

* More, p. 507. † De Comines.

however willing Richard may have been to make the harbouring of the Earl of Richmond a *casus belli*, and though he refused to prolong the truce, he was powerless to carry on a war. After the Earl, by his flight into France, had incurred the hostility of Peter Laudois, he appears to have reconciled himself to the Duke, and to have passed at will from France to Brittany, from Brittany to Wales, and back again to France. It was probably now that he visited Wales in disguise, and narrowly escaped capture. Pennant relates that, "at the time he was supposed to have been in Brittany" he was in hiding at Mostyn Castle in Flintshire, at the end of a long gallery in which is a large room said by tradition to have been occupied by him. During his stay at Mostyn, Pennant continues: "A party of Richard's forces arrived there on suspicion, and proceeded to search the castle. He was about to dine, but had just time to leap out of a back window which is to this day called 'The King's Hall.'" The story has a legendary air, but there is little doubt that Henry contrived to meet his mother in Wales about this time.

That Richard had it in his power to form a powerful coalition against France, cannot be questioned. That he failed to do so, in spite of the solicitations of Austria, Brittany, and Spain, can only be explained by his sense of insecurity at home. The attitude of Spain at this juncture was not a little singular. Throughout the reign of Edward IV. Isabella had given her support to Louis XI., apparently from motives of personal jealousy. Edward IV. had committed the unkingly act of marrying an English widow, when her royal hand might have been had for the asking.* Such,

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 32.

at all events, is the romantic reason assigned by the Queen in her overtures for an alliance with Richard III.

The Spanish Envoy, whom Ferdinand and Isabella had accredited to Richard, when he held his Court at Warwick Castle, was the bearer of a proposal very flattering to his ambition. Coming from the most powerful sovereigns of Europe, whose supremacy was felt at every Court, and whose friendship was the most earnest desire of every people in Christendom, a proposal for a marriage of the Infanta of Spain with Richard's only son, was calculated to give the King that importance in the eyes of European sovereigns which Louis XI. was unwilling to concede. But it did more than this. Queen Isabella informed Richard, that she had empowered "her orator" to convey her wish to enter into a strict alliance with him, and that if it was his intention to carry out his projected war with France, the preparations for which had been interrupted by the sudden death of Edward IV., her ports would be open to his navy, her ships at his service, and a Spanish force, "well armed and in sufficient number," raised for his behoof at no further cost to him than their wages. Another service of the Spanish Envoy which could not be unacceptable to Richard, was the disparagement of Elizabeth Woodville, whom the proud Isabella contemptuously designates "a widow woman of England." "Besides these instructions given in writing by this orator, he shewed to the King's grace by mouth, that the Queen of Castille was turned in her heart in times past from England, for the unkindness which she took against the King last deceased, for his refusing of her, and taking to his wife a widow of England. For which cause also was

mortal war betwixt him and the Earl of Warwick, the which took ever her part at the time of his death; and therefore she moved for these causes against her nature, the which was ever to love and favor England, as he said she took the French King's part and made leagues and confederations with him. Now the King is dead, which shewed her this unkindness, and, as he said, the French King hath broken four principal articles appointed betwixt him and the King of Castille and her; wherefore she, now returning to her kind and natural disposition, desireth such things to be appointed betwixt the realms of England and Spain, as ye may understand by these instructions of her said orator. Another cause which moved her to depart from King Louis was, that she had a grant from the Queen of Navarre to have her daughter and heir, for the Prince of Castille her son, if the consent of King Louis might thereon have been had; and forasmuch as he by no manner would be thereto agreeable, she taketh a great displeasure with him, and desireth, by all means to her possible, to make these alliances and confederations with the King's good grace, as be shewed in these instructions." *

But there were other causes of estrangement between the French and Spanish Courts, and although Richard received Isabella's ambassador with marked consideration, he was too wary to be drawn into hostilities with France. He met the overtures of Isabella with a cautious proposal to renew the league made between Edward IV. and Henry IV. of Castille, "provided alway that by anything so to be spoken, commoned,

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 235.

or treated, the King be not bounden above the olde articles, but be at his hole libertie in alle suche new maters unto the commyng of thembassate of Castille into England, and till they and the Kinges commissaries have thoroughly passed in all poyntes." * But Richard recognised the necessity of peace, and warily avoided the embroilment which again and again appeared imminent.

If Morton was informed of Richard's proceedings, the King was not less cognisant of the machinations of his enemies in France and Brittany. "Nor was he," writes the Croyland chronicler, "without the aid of friends beyond the sea, at whatever price they could be secured, from whom he learned nearly all the movements of the enemy." † Anne of Beaujeu was encouraging the Earl of Richmond to renew his attack upon England; the Duke of Brittany was supplying him with money; Morton was urging his marriage with the Princess Elizabeth. These stratagems could be better met by that subtlety of which Richard was so great a master than by the hazards of war, to which the whole nation was violently opposed. If the Earl married Elizabeth, Richard foresaw ruin to himself, and, as he had failed to frustrate this scheme by getting Henry into his power, he resolved at all hazards to prevent the proposed marriage. Queen Anne was in delicate health, and though it is highly improbable that Richard really contemplated marrying his niece, it is more than likely that he would willingly have seen her affianced to his son. But whilst this is little better than conjecture, it is certain that Richard allowed the report to be circulated that,

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 50.
† "Croyland Chronicle," p. 497.

in the event of his wife's death, he would marry the Princess Elizabeth. It is impossible that he could have calculated upon the consent either of Parliament or of the Pope to so unnatural a marriage; and equally impossible to suppose that he could have contemplated so impolitic an act at a crisis of such gravity, when he was anxious before all things to conciliate the nation by a resort to constitutional rule. To this end a Parliament must be summoned. This was the more important to Richard, that his title could hardly be considered unimpeachable until it had been confirmed by a regularly constituted Parliament.

A reconciliation with the Queen-mother might well have seemed a hopeless effort to the reputed murderer of her brother and her sons. But if this could be accomplished, and the consent of Elizabeth secured to the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the heir apparent, two formidable dangers would be circumvented,* for the adherents of the House of York were divided in their attachment to Richard and the surviving children of Edward IV. The union of the two branches of this House would paralyse their disaffection; whilst, if Henry Tudor wooed and won the young daughter of Edward IV., the union of the Houses of York and Lancaster would, sooner or later, unite all England against the "usurper."

Such I conceive to have been the double purpose to which Richard now addressed himself. It is certain that but for the

* The suggestion that Richard contemplated such a marriage is, as I have already said, conjectural. It is certainly probable. If, as has been often said, his purpose was to deceive Henry by professing an intention which he did not cherish of marrying the Princess himself, he would have encountered the same storm of indignation at home as though his avowed purpose had been genuine.

ELIZABETH OF YORK, QUEEN OF HENRY VII.

rebellion of Buckingham he would have summoned Parliament for the previous autumn. Some writs were issued in October or November, and the election actually took place at York, where a gentleman of the name of Wrangwysh, whom the citizens, as we have already seen, refused to elect as mayor at the supposed dictation of the Protector, was returned with another to represent the city.* The writs were however suspended, and it was not until the 23rd of January, 1484, that Parliament actually met. Bishop Russell, as Lord Chancellor, preached a sermon on the occasion from the text, "We have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office." The preacher's purpose was to urge the duty and necessity of unity in the body politic—to portray the misery and denounce the sin of rebellion. Of the recent insurrection of Buckingham, he says: "It is too heavy to think and see what case and danger by some one person, late a right great member of this body, many other noble members of the same have been brought unto. The example of this fall and righteous punition would not be forgotten. Whoso taketh upon him, being a member under the head, that what to his office appertaineth not, setting the people in rebellion or commotion against the Prince, be he never so great or noble in his estate, he is, as it were, a rotten member of the body, not able ne of might to save it from falling."

William Catesby, unhappily a trusted counsellor of the King, as he was the butt of popular satire, was elected Speaker. The function of Parliament under the Plantagenets was not to initiate or regulate legislation. Not being repre-

* Davies' "York Records," p. 182.

sentative of the people, its duties hardly went beyond registering, and thereby legalising the decisions of the executive government. On this occasion it sat for less than a month. But obstruction was not yet elevated into one of the fine arts; and the records of this session bear their testimony to an amount of useful legislation, in a Parliament not wholly obsequious to the royal will, which might well cause our modern legislators to sigh for a return of the good old times. Lord Campbell writes:

"From the destruction and obliteration of records which followed upon the change of dynasty, we have very imperfect details of the proceedings of this Parliament; but looking to the result of its deliberations as exhibited in the Statute Book, we have no difficulty in pronouncing it the most meritorious national council for protecting the liberty of the subject and putting down abuses in the administration of justice, which had sat since the time of Edward I."*

Its first duty was to pass an Act confirming the King's title, as already declared in the petition presented to him at Baynard's Castle, and settling the succession upon his heirs. It was declared that, forasmuch as *in the name of the three estates of the realm* articles enumerated in this Act had been presented to the King *by divers lords spiritual and temporal and other nobles*, "by occasion whereof divers doubts, questions, and ambiguities being moved and engendered in the minds of divers persons, therefore . . . be it ordained, provided, and established in this present Parliament that the tenor of the said Roll with all the contents of the same, presented . . . to our beforesaid sovereign lord the King in the name and on

* Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," vol. i., p. 348.

behalf of the said three estates out of Parliament, now by the same three estates assembled in this present Parliament be ratified, enrolled, recorded, etc., so that all things affirmed of the said Richard . . . be of like effect, virtue, and force, as if all the same things had been so said, affirmed, etc., in full Parliament." *

After this unequivocal confirmation of Richard's title the Act proceeds to record legal judgment against the validity of Edward IV.'s marriage, recognising all that Buckingham had alleged, confirming every declaration of the Bill supplicatory, and recognising Richard's son as heir apparent.

"After the ungracious pretended marriage, as all England hath cause so to say, made betwixt the said King Edward and Elizabeth sometime wife of Sir John Grey, Knight, late naming herself . . . Queen of England, the order of all politic rule was prevented, the laws of God and of God's Church, and also the laws of nature and of England, and also the laudable customs and liberties of the same . . . broken, subverted, and contemned, against all reason and justice, so that this land was ruled by self-will and pleasure, fear and dread, all manner of equity and laws laid apart, and despised. . . And here also we consider how the said pretended marriage . . . was made of great presumption, without the knowing and assent of the lords of this land, and also by sorcery and witchcraft committed by the said Elizabeth and her mother, Jaquert, Duchess of Bedford, as the common opinion of the people, and the public voice and fame is through all this land; . . . how that the said pretended

* "Rot. Parl.," vol. vi., p. 240.

marriage was made privily and secretly, without edition and banns, in a private chamber, a profane place . . . and how also that, at the time of contract of the same pretended marriage, and before, and long time after, the said King Edward was and stood married and troth plight to one Dame Eleanor Butler, daughter of the old Earl of Shrewsbury, with whom the same King Edward had made a pre-contract. . . . Which premises being true, as in very truth they are true, it appeareth and followeth evidently . . . that all the issue and children of the said King Edward be bastards, and unable to inherit or to claim auything by inheritance, by the law and custom of England. . . .

"Over this we consider how that ye be the undoubted son and heir of Richard, late Duke of York, very inheritor of the said crown and royal dignity, and as in right King of England by way of inheritance, and that . . . there is none other person living but ye only, that by right may claim the said crown and royal dignity by way of inheritance. . . . Wherefore we, desiring effectuously the peace, tranquillity, and public weal of this land, and having in your great prudence, justice, princely courtesy, and excellent virtue, singular confidence, have chosen, and in this our writing choose you, high and mighty prince, into our King and Sovereign Lord. . . . And we promise to serve and assist your highness, as true and faithful subjects and liegemen, and to live and die with you in this matter and every other just quarrel.

"For certainly we be determined rather to adventure and commit as to the peril of our lives and jeopardy of death than to live in such thraldom and bondage as we have lived

long time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new impositions against the laws of God and man, and the liberty, old policy, and laws of this realm wherein every Englishman is inherited.

"And over this . . . be it ordained that the said crown and royal dignity of this realm and the inheritance of the same and other things thereunto, within this same realm or without it, unite, annexed, and now appertaining rest and abide in the person of our said sovereign lord the King during his life, and after his decease in his heirs of his body begotten. And in especial . . . be it ordained, etc., that the high and excellent Prince Edward, son to our said sovereign lord the King, be heir apparent of the same . . . to succeed him in the above said crown and royal dignity, and to have them after the decease of our said sovereign lord the King, to him and to his heirs of his body lawfully begotten." *

An Act of Attainder was then passed against the leaders of the late rebellion. The long list of attainted lords and gentlemen is preceded by a declaration, that the King "moved with benygnyte and pite, and laying apart the greate rigours of the lawe," having granted undeserved pardon to many, the example of which might prove dangerous, Parliament on its

* "Rot. Parl.," vol. vi., pp. 241, 242. It is matter of interest to observe that, whilst in the reign of Edward IV. and the early Plantagenets, public documents were indiscriminately drawn up in Latin and French, the latter language was employed in the reign of Richard III. The MSS. containing the Statutes of the first two Parliaments of Henry VII. are in French. Thenceforward they are entirely in English. The promulgation of the Statutes *in print*, in the form of Sessional Publications, began in the first year of Richard III. (1484), very shortly after the introduction of printing. See First General Report of the Commissioners for the Preservation of Public Records, appointed in 1800, pp. 106–110.

own responsibility checks the royal clemency, and thus defines its principle of action. "To the intent that benignity and pity be not so exalted that justice be set apart, nor that justice so proceed that benignity have no place, but that a due moderation be observed in every behalf." *

The names of exactly one hundred persons were inscribed in this bill, including the Duke of Buckingham, the Earls of Richmond and Pembroke, Bishop Morton, and three others, as leaders of the revolt in Wales; Sir John Fogge and twenty-seven others from the counties of Kent and Surrey, fourteen from Berkshire, thirty-three who headed the revolt in Wiltshire, with the Marquis of Dorset and seventeen others connected with the rising at Exeter.† The Bishops of Exeter and Salisbury escaped with the confiscation of their lands. The Countess of Richmond was spared the penalty of attainder, and her lands, as we have seen, though nominally confiscated, were given to her husband, Lord Stanley, for life, with remainder to the King. The indictment condemns her "especially in sending messages, writings, and tokens to the said Henry, desiring, procuring, and stirring him by the same to come into this realm and make war against our said sovereign lord the King." Also that the Countess had raised large sums of money, "as well within the city of London as in other places in this realm, to be employed to the execution of the said treasonable and malicious purpose," and further, that she had conspired with the late Duke of Buckingham. "Yet, nevertheless, our said sovereign lord of his especial grace, remembering the good and faithful service that Thomas Lord

* "Rot. Parl.," vol. vi., p. 245. † *Ibid.* p. 246.

Stanley hath done and intendeth to do to our said sovereign lord, and for the good love and truth that the King hath in him, and for his sake, remitteth and will forbear the great punishment of attainder of the said countess." *

Another ameliorating feature of these attainders, in harmony with Richard's chivalrous bearing towards women, has not, I believe, been heretofore noticed. It was ordained that "every of the wives of every of the said persons by this act attainted or unabled, and every such woman as was the wife of any of the said persons now dead by this act attainted or unabled, freely enjoy, have, and possess, after the death of her husband, all her own inheritance . . . and all castles, lordships, manors, lands, and other tenements whereof she the said 18th day of October in any wise was seized or possessed in her own right . . . *or jointly with her husband*, or with any other person or persons, and that it be lawful to every of said wives and women . . . to enter into the same castles, &c., into whose possession soever they be seased or come, as well upon the possession of the King or upon the possession of any other person." †

The corollary of this Act was another for rewarding the King's adherents. But it was the public acts of this Parliament, the genuine attempt to reform abuses and to give his subjects the protection of just laws, which entitled Richard to their gratitude, and surely to a measure of admiration from posterity, whose estimate of his character and acts has been formed by that portraiture which the exigencies of art have led our great dramatist to draw in lineaments which can never fade. Every punish-

* "Rot. Parl.," vol. vi., pp. 250, 251. † *Ibid.*, p. 248.

ment, however merited by treason, was seized upon by those from whom Shakspeare has drawn his history, as an illustration of odious tyranny; every exercise of authority as cruel and unjust. But if Richard, says Mr. Gairdner, "in the way he acquired his crown was a tyrant and a usurper, he at least made it his endeavour, so far as it lay in his power, to prevent tyranny for the future." Acts were passed to remedy the imperfect and corrupt administration of justice, to give security of tenure to purchasers of land, and to define the powers of Justices of the Peace.*

This latter Act is worthy of special notice. Between 1275 and 1444 the Sheriffs' powers had been to a great extent transferred to the Justices of the Peace, in whom the power of admitting prisoners to bail were vested by a series of statutes. The statutes of Edward III. (1360) gave the justices power to bail in very general terms. Two evils resulted. The justices "by sinister labour and means set at large the greatest and most notable offenders, such as be most replevisable by the laws of this realm." And, as recited by the statute of Richard III., "many persons have been daily arrested and imprisoned, some for malice, and sometimes of a light suspicion." The Act therefore empowered every Justice of the Peace "to let such persons to bail and mainprice, in like form as though the said person were indicted thereof of record before the same justices in their sessions."† Another Act provided that the property of persons imprisoned for felony should not be seized before conviction. It is worthy of observation that these Acts of the "tyrant" Richard III.

* Statutes i., Richard III.

† Sir James Stephen's "Hist. of the Crim. Law of England," vol. i., p. 236.

were repealed by his successor. Another Act directed that none should be returned to serve upon a jury but those who possessed forty shillings a year freehold, "because so many untrue verdicts had been given by persons 'of no substance or behaviour, and not dreading God or worldly shame,' and thereby several had, through the excitation of their evil willers, been wrongfully indicted, and others improperly spared." *

Another Act was passed to prevent, by the imposition of heavy penalties, malpractices in the manufacture of wool, and in other ways to foster the growth of commerce. Several other Acts were passed by this practical Parliament, one of which claims notice as illustrating Richard's disposition to encourage the growth of letters. This was an Act providing that no unrepealed statutes should henceforth act as a hindrance to "any artificer or merchant stranger, of what nation or country he be, for bringing into this realm, or selling by retail or otherwise, any manner of books written or imprinted."

But the principal Act of this session was one for the abolition of benevolences. Edward IV. had dispensed with the authority of Parliament in contracting loans for his costly military operations and licentious and extravagant Court. Gifts and "benevolences" were requested from the merchants and the corporations of the towns. These exactions were bitterly resented, and, though for the time resistance was hopeless, the grievance rankled in men's bosoms and even found expression in Parliament. Nothing was easier than

* Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 567.

for Richard to have arbitrarily annulled the iniquitous system, but with the instinct of the statesman he determined that its abolition should be recorded in the Statute Book. The exordium of the Act which was designed to sweep away the odious impost, which in the next century was to furnish a precedent for Stuart illegality, runs thus:

"Remembering how the commons, by new and unlawful innovations against the laws of this realm, have been put to great thraldom and exactions, and in especial by a new imposition called Benevolence, be it ordained that the commonalty of this realm from henceforth in no wise be charged therewith, and that such exactions aforetime taken shall be for no example to make the like hereafter, but shall be damned and annulled for ever." *

So bold and honest an attempt to grapple with the various evils which afflicted the State may surely be held to have entitled Richard to the gratitude and confidence of his subjects, and to have justified the recognition by convocation of his "most noble and blessed disposition" to redress grievances. Even Bacon is constrained to admit that he was jealous of the honour of the English nation, "and likewise a good lawmaker for the ease and solace of the common people." Unfortunately Bacon had a propensity to indulge in "flouts and gibes," and this noble testimony is marred by the imputation of unworthy motives. Richard's good laws, he says, unjustly enough, and on the authority only of the King's inexorable foes, "were interpreted to be but a Brocage of an usurper, thereby to wooe and win the hearts of the people." Else-

* Statutes i., Richard III. Quoted by Lord Campbell.

where, and forgetting for a moment his violent prejudice, he speaks with admiration of "his politic and wholesome laws." They have deservedly received the eulogy of statesmen, lawyers, and historians whose verdict may be summed up in the words of Sir Richard Baker: "In no King's reign were better laws made than in the reign of this man." Under Edward IV. the two Houses of Parliament had suffered a collapse. It was the purpose of Richard to restore to them that power which they had gradually acquired under the three Edwards, not even excepting the right of self-taxation.

We have said that Richard was anxiously concerned to conciliate the nation. He was no less anxious to stand well with the Church. Convocation still asserted its ancient rights as against the Crown; but the Church was weakened by the immorality of the clergy who were given over to sensuality, and by the constant attacks of the barons upon its territorial possessions. The encroachments of the civil power had also exasperated the higher clergy, who from their relative strength in the House of Peers, where they outnumbered the lay lords, might retaliate their wrongs and cause serious embarrassment to the Crown. Richard was reasonably anxious not to make an enemy of the powerful Cardinal at the head of the Church in England. It was an act of policy, doubtless, on the part of the King to show his zeal for religion by attacking that element of weakness in the Church which had become a public scandal, and was deplored by the majority of the Bishops. It cemented an alliance between the Crown and the heads of the Church, which might serve to postpone questions of their relative rights. But, when all allowance is made for considerations of policy, we must recognise a genuine desire to check

the profligacy of the age in the following Circular Letter to the Bishops, for the checking of vice and the promotion of piety and virtue, both in temporal and spiritual men.

"Reverend Fathers in God, right truly and well-beloved, we greet you weel; ascertaining you that amongst other our secular business and cares, our principal intent and fervent desire is to see virtue and cleanness of living to be advanced, increased and multiplied, and vices and all other things repugnent to virtue, provoking the high indignation and fearful displeasure of God, to be repressed and annulled. And this perfectly followed and put in execution by persons of high estate, pre-eminence, and dignity, not only induceth persons of lower degree to take example thereof and to ensue the same, but also thereby the great and infinite goodness of God is made placable, and graciously inclined to the exaudicion of our petitions and prayers. And for as much as it is notarily known that in every jurisdiction, as well in their pastoral cure as other, there be many, as well of the spiritual party as of the temporal, delyring from the true way of virtue and good living, to the pernicious example of others, and loathesomeness of every well-disposed person: We therefore will and desire you, and on God's behalf inwardly exhort and require you that, according to the charge of your profession, ye will seek within the authority of your jurisdiction all such persons as set apart virtue and promote the damnable execution of sin and vices, to be reformed, repressed, and punished condignly after their demerits; not sparing for any love, favour, dread or affection; whether the offender be spiritual or temporal. Wherein ye may be assured we shall give unto you our favour,

aid, and assistance if the case shall so require, and see to the sharp punishment of the repugnators and interrupters, if any such be.

"And if ye will diligently apply you to the execution and performing of this matter, ye shall not only do unto God right acceptable pleasure, but over that we shall see such persons spiritual as be under your pastoral cure, none other wise to be intreated or punished for their offences but according to the ordinances and laws of Holy Church. And if for the due execution of the premisses any complaint or suggestion be made unto us of you, we shall remit the determination thereof unto the Courts of our cousin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal. And thus proceeding to the execution hereof ye shall do unto yourself great honour, and unto us right singular pleasure.

"Given, etc., at Westminster, the 10th day of March." *

This letter warranted the Bishops in believing that they might confidently look to Richard to check the oppressions which the Church had suffered at the hands of the Crown and the baronage. And that this confidence was appreciated and reciprocated by the King appears from the fact that a few weeks later, he wrote to Pope Sixtus IV. explaining the cause of delay in doing him obeisance, and accrediting Bishop Langton for this purpose. Thus far, then, success had attended Richard's sagacious designs for making buttresses to his throne out of the very elements of its weakness. He had secured an unquestionable parliamentary title, and by

* See Buck, in Kennett, vol. i., p. 576.

wise and generous legislation he had quickened the hopes and confirmed the wavering attachment of many of the leaders of opinion in Church and State. "Compare him now impartially with other Princes," wrote William Cornwallis, "and thou shalt find him as ignorant of cruelty, extortion, and revenge, as the most; as wise, politic, valliant as any." *

The ex-Queen and her five daughters were still in sanctuary at Westminster, and little likely to be won by the specious words or subtle devices of the abhorred "usurper," unless reasons, which we shall presently consider, constrained them to discredit the villanies with which Richard was charged. The King, on the other hand, was wearied of his six months' watch at the door of their conventual prison. A tyrant, or an impolitic prince in Richard's position, would have defied the protection which the Church extended to his foes. He was not without provocation to use harsh measures, for the Queen, after Elizabeth had been formally affianced to the Earl of Richmond, was more obstinate than ever in her refusal to quit sanctuary. But Richard desired not only to obtain power over the persons of the Princesses, but to win their confidence; and further to secure the sanction of the Church either, as has been supposed, to his own contemplated marriage with Elizabeth, or that of his son. After some years' careful consideration of this question, I have no hesitation in recording my own conviction that the latter project was that which the King seriously contemplated, however from motives of policy he might dissemble his purposes. The one essential thing was to secure a

* MS. in the Duke of Devonshire's Collection, p. 14.

reconciliation with the Queen, and to frustrate Morton's plans for the marriage of the Princess; "for he thought if that marriage fayled, the Erle's chiefe combe had bene clerly cut." *

The project was bold; but Richard had triumphed over too many obstacles to be daunted in a scheme which united against him all the passions by which humanity is most profoundly stirred. It showed perhaps his accurate knowledge of the Queen's character. Her great ambition was to be restored to regal state. If this was now impossible, the alliance of her daughter with the heir apparent was a bait for her ambition, than which Henry Tudor could offer no greater. It was needful, in the first instance, to convince the lords spiritual and temporal that the safety of the Queen and the Princesses would not be jeopardised by their acceptance of the offer which the King was prepared to make to them. Until this was done their co-operation could not be hoped for, in inducing the Queen to throw herself upon the protection of the reputed murderer of her sons. He summoned them, with the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City, to hear and discuss with him the terms of his proposal, which were as follows: †

"M^d that I, Richard, by the grace of God, etc., in the presence of you, my lords spiritual and temporal, and you, mayor and aldermen of my city of London, promise and swear, *verbo regio*, upon these holy Evangelists, that if the daughters of dame Elizabeth Grey, late calling herself Queen of England, that is to wit, Elizabeth, Cecily, Anne, Katherine,

* Hall, p. 406. † Harl. MSS., 433, 308 b.

and Bridget, will come unto me out of the sanctuary of Westminster, and be guided, ruled, and demeaned after me, then I shall see that they shall be in surety of their lives, and also not suffer any manner hurt by any manner person or persons to them or any of them or their bodies and persons, to be done by way of ravishing or defiling contrary to their wills, nor them nor any of them imprison within the Tower of London or other prison; but that I shall put them in honest places of good name and fame, and them honestly and courteously shall see to be founden and entreated, and to have all things requisite and necessary for their exhibition and finding as my kinswomen; and that I shall do marry such of them as now be marriageable to gentlemen born, and every of them give in marriage lands and tenements to the yearly value of 200 marks for term of their lives, and in likewise to the other daughters when they shall come to lawful age of marriage, if they live. And such gentlemen as shall hap to marry with them I shall straitly charge from time to time lovingly to love and entreat them, as their wives and my kinswomen, as they will avoid and eschew my displeasure.

"And over this, that I shall yearly henceforth content and pay, or cause to be contented and paid, for the exhibition and finding of the said Dame Elizabeth Grey, during her natural life, at four terms of the year, that is to wit, at Pasche, Midsummer, Michaelmas, and Christmas, to John Nesfeld, one of the esquires of my body, for his finding to attend upon her, the sum of 700 marks of lawful money of England, by even portions; and moreover, I promise to them that if any surmise or evil report be made to me of them or any of them by any person or persons, that then I shall not give thereunto faith

nor credence, nor therefor put them to any manner punishment, before that they or any of them so accused may be at their lawful defence and answer. In witness whereof, to this writing of my oath and promise aforesaid in your said presence made, I have set my sign manual, the first day of March, the first year of my reign." *

The consent of the Lords being secured, Richard sent to the Queen "diverse and often messengers which first should excuse and purge him of all things before against her attempted or procured, and after should so largely promise promotions innumerable and benefits not only to her but also to her son, Lord Thomas Marquis Dorset, that they should bring her if it were possible into some wan-hope, or as some men say into a fool's paradise." † The mutable mind of Elizabeth was easily impressed by the King's flattering overtures, enforced by "men both of wit and gravity." Her obstinacy relaxed, and "she began somewhat to relent and to give to them no deaf ear."‡ In a few days all her purposes were changed, and she was as anxious to quit sanctuary as she had hitherto been determined to resist all persuasion to do so. Of her own accord she wrote to the Marquis of Dorset, then with the Earl of Richmond at Paris, urging him to forsake the Earl and without delay to return to England.§

On the 1st of March, just ten months after they entered sanctuary, the family of Edward IV. left their voluntary confinement, no longer a Queen and Royal Princesses, but private gentlewomen. Richard offered protection and large rewards to the Marquis of Dorset on condition of his recog-

* Ellis' "Original Letters," 2nd Series, vol. i., pp. 149, 150.
† Hall, p. 406. ‡ Grafton, p. 836. § *Ibid.*

nising and accepting accomplished facts. That the Queen was in favour of this course is certain. Yielding to her advice and to the King's flattering promises, the Marquis stole away from Paris by night, intending to escape to Flanders.* But the Earl of Richmond would not willingly lose one who might prove valuable, if only as a hostage. His flight was discovered. The Earl applied to the French Court for leave to apprehend him, and brought him back a prisoner to Paris.

By what means Elizabeth's natural aversion to, and distrust of Richard were removed, we have no means of ascertaining with certainty. There can be no doubt that they had been strong enough to warrant the indignant disclaimer of relationship which Shakspeare has put into her mouth:

> Cousins indeed! and by their uncle cozened
> Of comfort, kingdom, freedom, life.
> Whose hands soever lanced their tender hearts,
> Thy head all indirectly gave direction;
> No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt,
> Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,
> To revel in the entrails of my lambs.

Nor can we doubt that had the King made a proposal for the hand of his niece, the moral sensibilities of the Queen would have been shocked and his purpose certainly defeated. The Queen's fears must also have been awakened. For, if Richard was prepared to get rid of his wife in order to contract an illicit marriage, what assurance could she have that her life and the lives of the Princesses would be safe? Well might she ask:

> Under what title shall I woo for thee,
> That God, the law, my honour, and her love,
> Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

The Queen's actions were so frequently divorced from any

* More, p. 509.

discoverable motive as to render hopeless the search for any adequate explanation of her reconciliation with Richard apart from that which has been already suggested. It is evident that something had occurred which wholly changed the current of her feeling toward him. She declared that she was "highly incorporate in the King's heart," and that "all offences were forgotten and forgiven." May not that "something" have been Richard's clearing himself from complicity in the murder of the Princes, and his proposal to heal their differences by the marriage of their offspring?

It may be that the ex-Queen listened to the entreaties of her own children, or, being aware of her real insecurity, and convinced of the hopelessness of reliance upon the Earl of Richmond, made that utter sacrifice of self of which a mother only is capable. But this is not in harmony with all that we know of the weakness and selfishness of her character. Hitherto her conduct had been influenced by the belief that Richard was the murderer of her sons. Henceforward it is consistent with, where it does not actually involve, a belief that one of them still lived. The King had neither confirmed nor denied the rumour that they had been murdered in the Tower. If his reputation suffered by such rumours they contributed to the stability of his throne, for if the Princes were dead he stood the undisputed heir of Edward IV. But, as we have seen, even More admits that many disbelieved the story of the murder. The King's silence confirmed these doubts. In his interview with Elizabeth the fate of her unhappy sons must have formed a subject of conversation, must, if known to Richard, have been revealed to her. Weak, vain, ambitious as she was, it is inconceivable that she became reconciled to their avowed murderer, or that she consented to bestow her daughter

upon the son of such an one, much less upon the murderer himself. On the hypothesis that her mother's heart was gladdened with proof that one of her sons still lived, and that her reconciliation and support were purchased by promises of favour to him and justice to his sisters, her subsequent conduct is explained. This is no random conjecture. It is at least consistent with every known fact, and its strongest claim for acceptance lies in this—that it resolves difficulties which are otherwise insoluble. It is no valid objection to this theory that it favours—though it does not involve—a recognition of the claims of Perkin Warbeck. The children of Edward IV. were all short-lived, and it is more credible that one of the Princes should have died a natural or violent death in the Tower in the reign of Henry VII. than that his uncle Richard was his executioner. Sir Thomas More's doubts whether the Princes "were destroyed or no *in the days of King Richard,*" entitle us to claim his authority for this conjecture.

It is no explanation of Elizabeth's singular confidence in the King to say that his guarantees were supported by the lords spiritual and temporal. Cardinal Bourchier had pledged his soul and body for the safety of the Princes; yet they had disappeared. It was much, doubtless, that her daughters would exchange a forlorn and perilous condition for one of happiness and assumed safety. Yet for ten months their mother had spurned such assurances. Nothing less than some satisfactory explanation of the disappearance of her sons, and a guarantee that her daughter would ultimately share the throne of England, can account for the fact that the Queen, with her five daughters, exchanged this conventual prison for Richard's Court, where, says the chronicler, "they were received with all princely kindnesse."

CHAPTER IV.

Again, by sheer force of intellect, Richard had vanquished difficulties, and broken up the league upon which the Earl of Richmond's hopes depended. Yet he was as far as ever from realising that sense of security, that relief from the tension of ever-wakeful anxiety at which we must suppose him to have aimed.

An oath of allegiance was exacted from every person between the ages of sixteen and sixty, and the magistrates of the southern counties were charged to forbid the wearing or the distribution of any livery, badge, or cognizance other than the King's. This was the most direct blow which Richard had yet struck at the baronage. In feudal times every baron had a distinctive mark for his retainers—an emblematic figure woven into the dress or fastened upon the breast. In the absence of written language these symbols were of great practical utility. Their presence was intended to declare a certain definite and intelligible fact. Every man who wore the symbolic blazonry proclaimed himself the follower of a recognised lord, and the practice of distributing badges and liveries to other than his legal retainers exaggerated his importance, and in some cases had been attended with danger

to the State. Whilst Richard thus gave a death-blow to the feudal custom which had been introduced by the Crusaders * he patronised the art of heraldry,† and was the founder of the College and Society of Heralds. Sir George Buck tells us that "he established by Royal charter, and placed the Heralds in an ancient fair house which was called Yorkime sometimes, after commonly Coleharbour, situate upon the Thames, ordaining four Kings-at-Arms. . . . He further established that these four Kings-at-Arms and the rest of the Heralds who are of the Charter. . . . should lodge, live, and common together in that House where the Rolls, Monuments, and Writings appertaining to the office of the art of Heraldry and Armoury should be kept, giving also lands and tenements for the perpetual maintaining of a chaplain or chantry priest to say and sing service every day, and to pray for the King, Queen, and Prince, and for their souls when they were dead." ‡

The King's sense of insecurity was further shown in the diligence with which he strengthened the navy. Seamen were impressed, and ships were purchased from the Spaniards to increase the efficiency of the scattered fleet, especially for service on the coast of Scotland. This at least seems probable from the wording of the commission, "to take mariners in the King's name, for the furnishing of the ships

* The badge or cognizance of mediæval times may still be seen on decayed public buildings in rural districts, where their feudal associations are unsuspected. They survive also as the signs of taverns, preserving in certain localities the memory of their feudal lords. Thus the White Swan, the badge of Edward of Lancaster, is only found as a tavern sign in the North of England. The Lion, though common, is most frequent in Norfolk.

† In the Middle Ages heraldry occupied a conspicuous place in diplomacy; and the Institution of the College of Heralds by Richard was a boon to the country.

‡ Sir George Buck, p. 138.

and to do service upon the sea." Four ships are then named, the *Andrew*, the *Michael*, the *Bastion*, and the *Tyre*, which are "for service of war upon the sea in the north parts." * We now also meet with the earliest notice of the manufacture of gunpowder in England. It is not a little singular that the use of gunpowder in war was so slow in superseding those weapons by which English warriors had won their renown. Edward III. organised an artilllery train and an ordnance establishment just 140 years before the time we are considering; yet it is doubtful whether artillery was employed at Tewkesbury, and there is no *record* of its use at Bosworth Field, although the Record Office accounts show that ninety years earlier, in 1395, saltpetre and sulphur were purchased for the manufacture of gunpowder.† It is to a *foreigner* that Richard now had recourse for its supply, as we learn from a "warrant to aid and assist John Collingham, yeoman of the crown, whom the King deputed to take in his name all manner of stuff necessary for the making of certain great stuff of

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 168.

† That artillery was very sparingly, if at all, employed in the battles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may be inferred from the fact that no discoveries of balls or bullets have been made upon the site of any battlefield. The alleged discovery (related by Mr. Hutton), of some small cannon-balls on Bosworth Field is of very doubtful authenticity. Mr. Darwin ("Vegetable Mould," p. 177), relates that a surprising number of iron arrow-heads were found many years ago in a field near Shrewsbury, relics of the battle fought in 1403; but of balls or bullets no trace has rewarded the diligent search of antiquaries earlier than the sixteenth century, although the fact that ordnance establishments existed throughout the fifteenth century is indisputable. In a document relating to a writ of Privy Seal directed to the authorities of Bristol in 1462, the following passage occurs: "Hit is to bee Remembered that in the dayes of the regne of King Harry, that was of dede, and nott of right, there was sent to Bristowe v barels of gonne powdyr, iiij barels of salt petyre, and two barels of Brymstone powdyr . . . . by oon John Judde, that tyme Maistre of the same Harries ordyn'nce."—*Proceedings of the Archæological Institute, Bristol*, p. 29.

gunpowder, *which John Bramburgh, a stranger born,* had covenanted with the King to make for him, and for the same to agree and make prices with the owners." †

Before the approach of summer, Richard must have realised the fact that neither by good legislation, by the reconciliation he had effected with Edward's family, nor by the temporary discomfiture of his enemies, had he made any way to the hearts of his subjects. Even if we reject altogether Sir Thomas More's awful picture of the torments of a remorseful conscience, he can have had little satisfaction in reflecting upon the means by which he had acquired the crown, and less hope of its ever being to him other than a burden and a curse. He trusted none, and was conscious that none trusted him. In his generous offerings to religious houses historians have discovered indications of a remorseful desire to expiate crime. The superstitious ideas of the time may favour this assumption, but they do not warrant it. From his early childhood Richard manifested that respect for religion in which he had been nurtured. When, in the agony of grief occasioned by the death of his only son, he wrote the words "whom God pardon" after his signature to the warrant for the payment of the boy's debts, it would be as reasonable to assume that he held his infant son guilty of mortal sin, as that he sought to atone for his own sins by deeds of charity. Both were the expression of a genuine religious sentiment. When he built the Chapel of the Virgin in the Church of Allhallows, near the Tower, and founded there a religious college, as when he contributed generously towards the

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 145.

completion of King's College, Cambridge, he gratified his well-known architectural tastes, and gave expression to his regard for religion. It is a perfectly gratuitous assumption that in these, and a hundred other instances, the motive was remorse for crime and a desire to propitiate the Almighty. Seventy years before, the saintly John Oldcastle was charged by the clergy with shrouding an evil life "under a veil of holiness." It is ever the men of impure motives who are ready to predicate the same of others. But, as those who knew him testified, Richard "was largely interested in virtues their contraries, but those through malice are not registered."*

The language in which, as we have seen, the houses of Convocation addressed the King should for ever silence such calumnies: "Seeing your *most noble and blessed disposition* in all other things, we beseech you . . . *as a most Catholic prince,* to see such remedies, that under your most gracious letters patent the liberties of the Church may be confirmed."

It is impossible to suppose that men such as Alcock, Langton, Russell, Fisher, and the two Archbishops who had so recently sworn to be answerable for the safety of King Edward's sons, could have been guilty of the consummate hypocrisy of thus addressing one whom they believed to be a remorse-stricken murderer. The language of convocation must be taken as expressing a contemporary judgment of Richard III. by the whole body of the English clergy.

The King acceded to their petition, redressed many of their grievances, and gave new proof of his sincerity by liberal grants both for the repair of the fabrics of various

* Cornewaleys MS. in the Duke of Devonshire's Library, p. 6.

churches, the foundation of a college for one hundred priests at York, and other acts of piety inconsistent with hardened criminality. Amongst these prominence is given to "a munificent grant for the rebuilding of the Abbey of Fakenham in Norfolk, which had been recently destroyed by fire." * In this case the absence of that personal vanity, and desire for the applause of men with which prejudice has charged Richard, is somewhat remarkably shown in the fact that whilst the fine flint tower of Fakenham Church in no way commemorates his munificence, it bears the monogram of his rival.†

Generous, free-hearted, and open-handed, Richard's benevolence was manifested on a scale that would seem incredible, were it not proved by public documents the existence of which was unknown to his calumniators.‡ The Harleian library contains an invaluable folio volume in manuscript, formerly belonging to the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, which, whilst it dissipates many myths, affords the historian a solid ground-work of unimpeachable facts. It contains a register of the grants and public documents which passed the Privy Seal during the reigns of Edward V. and Richard III., numbering no less than *two thousand three hundred and seventy-eight articles.* "When it is remembered," writes Miss

* Miss Halsted, vol. ii., p. 297. Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 121.

† On the west front, the town belonging to the Duchy of Lancaster—a further proof of Richard's even-handed justice. Norfolk seems to have been specially favoured by the King. On the 20th of February, 1484, a warrant was issued for the payment of £46 13*s.* 4*d.* (equivalent to £500 at the present day) "to the Abbot of Creke in the county of Norfolk, being the King's gift towards the re-edifying of the same, bring lately by misfortune burnt down." —Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 153 b.

‡ Even these do not exhaust the list, for "it is ascertained that no complete collection has ever been printed." See "First General Report of the Commissioners for the Preservation of the Public Records," p. 92.

Halsted, "that these entries commemorate the proceedings of little more than two short years, and that, apart from mere official edicts, they abound in instances of generosity and benevolence, together with proofs of his just, equable, and prudent administration, it will be seen how great injustice has been done to Richard III. as King, whatever difference of opinion may prevail as regards his character as a man." *

Richard's ability as a general was universally allowed, and the growing apprehension of a French invasion served to check that disaffection which Margaret Beaufort and her allies had sedulously stimulated. The peace of the kingdom was indeed simultaneously threatened from Scotland, France, and Flanders. It was in vain that the coast was put in a state of defence, men impressed for service, ships chartered, and stores accumulated. Every detail of the King's efforts to provide against a surprise was known at the Courts of Brittany and Paris, and by the watchful Morton in Flanders.

Although the Archduke Maximilian had failed in his efforts to secure a league between England, Austria, and Brittany,† Richard concluded a truce with the duchy for one year. This was on the 8th of June, and notwithstanding that the object of the truce was to strengthen the Duke of Brittany in his contest with France, Richard was not the less anxious to maintain amicable relations with Charles VIII. But Charles referred everything to his sister, Anne of Beaujeu, who, we are told, "had such an influence upon him in his minoritie, that she out-pitched Lewis, Duke of Orleans, chiefe Prince of the blood." As before, at the Court of Brittany, so now at

* Miss Halsted, vol. ii., p. 139.

† "Letters and Papers of Richard III.," vol. ii., p. 46.

that of France, the Earl of Richmond dexterously addressed himself to the lady when the sterner sex declined to espouse his cause, and with like success. "This lady," says Buck, "had so flexible an inclination to the Earle of Richmond's cause, that she importuned the King to aide him with a good summe of mony and 3000 men, but odde fellows." England's alliance with Burgundy, and subsequently with the Archduke Maximilian, to whom Burgundy had passed with his wife, the daughter of Charles the Bold, had been a thorn in the side of France. And, now that Richard had openly aided the Duke of Brittany, the relations of the two countries could no longer be those of peace.

Charles VIII., a boy of thirteen, occupied himself with the study of the lives of Cæsar and Alexander, whom he proposed to make the models of his own performances.* To secure a friend in place of an enemy on the throne of England was now the object of his policy. Men and money were supplied to the Earl of Richmond, whose English supporters driven from the Court of Brittany by the impolitic action of the Duke's ministers, were mustering at the French capital. But it was important to Henry to maintain good relations with Brittany. "Thriftie of all opportunities," and relying upon the friendship of the Duchess and of Laudois, Treasurer and Chief Counsellor of the Duke, he returned to Vannes. The force which Anne of Beaujeu had promised was inadequate to his purpose, and he solicited the further aid of Brittany. The Duke, however, was offended by his former escape into France, and reasoned that, even

* Gairdner's "Richard III."

if his enterprise succeeded, it would be ill for the Duchy, which would be placed at the mercy of France by an alliance between that country and England. The support of Richard was of more value to the impecunious Duke than the friendship of Henry. The revenues of the Earldom of Richmond had formerly belonged to the Dukes of Brittany, and, in addition to other costly gifts to the Duke and his minister, Richard had agreed to restore these revenues of the principality, on condition of the capture and surrender of the Earl. The Duke therefore determined to detain him, and, probably without any intention of surrendering him to Richard, to use him as an instrument for replenishing his empty coffers. But Henry had not relied in vain upon his powerful influence, or the currency of his promises to Laudois, and, advised in time of the Duke's purpose, he again effected his escape into France in the garb of a page.

On the 24th of June, a proclamation was issued against the Earl of Richmond and his adherents, the object of which was to quicken in the minds of the whole community, but especially of the clergy, a sense of imminent peril. The following are the instructions addressed by the King to the Lord Chancellor: To prepare a proclamation "according to the tenor hereafter ensuing. For as much as the King our sovereign lord hath certain knowledge that Piers, Bishop of Exeter, Jasper Tidder, son of Owen Tidder, calling himself Earl of Pembroke, John, late Earl of Oxford, and Sir Edward Widevile, with others divers his rebels, traitours, disabled and attainted by authority of the High Court of Parliament, of whom many have been known for open murderers, adulterers, and extortioners, contrary to the pleasure of God

and against all truth, honour, and nature, have forsaken their natural country . . . and to abuse and blind the commons of this realm, the said rebels have chosen to be their captain one Henry Tidder, son of Edmond Tidder, son of Owen Tidder, which of his ambitious and insatiable covetousness, encroacheth and usurpeth upon him the name and title of royal estate of this realm of England." The proclamation goes on to show that Henry is descended of bastard blood on both sides; whilst, if he should achieve his purpose, "every man's life, livelihood, and goods, should be in his hands, liberty, and disposition, whereby should ensue the disheriting and destruction of all the noble and worshipful blood of this realm for ever."

So much for the laity; but the whole hierarchy of the Church, as well as the baronage, might well be alarmed by the declaration that "in more proof and showing of his said purpose of conquest, the said Henry Tidder hath given as well to divers of the Kings and enemies as to his said rebels and traitors the archbishoprics and bishoprics and other dignities spiritual, and also the duchies, earldoms, baronies, and other possessions and inheritances of knights, esquires, gentlemen, and other the King's true subjects within this realm, and intendeth also to change and subvert the laws of the same . . . . if they can be of power to do the most cruel murders, slaughters, robberies, and disherisons that ever were seen in any Christian realm." The King's good and true subjects are therefore exhorted to arm themselves "with all their powers for the defence of them, their wives, children, goods, and hereditaments against the said malicious purposes and conspiracies."*

* See "Rot. Parl.," vol. vi., pp. 162–6; and Fenn, "Original Letters,"

The proclamation accomplished its purpose in producing that general sense of insecurity which led men to recall the King's heroic achievements in war; and, in reliance upon the valour and ability of their sovereign, to forget for the time his obnoxious ministers, and the sinister rumours which had prejudiced him in their esteem, and which were now seen to have a political origin and purpose.

If the vigilance of Richard could have secured the country from the danger of invasion, England would have been safe. For seven months following the 1st of March, he moved about the country incessantly. On the 5th we have seen him at Cambridge, addressing credentials to the Pope in favour of Langton and two other ecclesiastics. The Queen accompanied him on this occasion, and both town and university experienced the royal bounty. We have already noticed Richard's patronage of both Universities. At Cambridge he appears to have specially favoured King's College, towards the chapel of which from first to last he contributed no less than £700.* Another illustration is here afforded of his love of architecture, in which he was always careful to use the best materials, as is shown by licenses for artificers to go to France and Normandy to buy Caen stone, and also plaster and glass. Immediately after this visit to Cambridge he addressed a letter to the Bishop of Lincoln, the Lord Chancellor, "dated from our town of ——ngdon, 12th March, directing him to make a commission under the Great Seal for taking such carpenters and other artificers as might be thought expedient for finishing of the chapel of Our Lady and St. Nicholas (now King's

vol. ii., p. 321. Fenn says that on the back of one of these proclamations, in an ancient handwriting, is written, "KENT CHERFYS" (Sheriffs).

* Cooper's "Annals of Cambridge."

College), in the University of Cambridge."* Before leaving the town he "devoutly founded an exhibition for four priests" at Queen's College, which he further richly endowed at the especial request of the Queen, who, according to Lancastrian writers, he was at this very time persecuting to death.† Queen Anne also patronised Margaret College, and the royal guests, after an enthusiastic entertainment by the University, took their final leave of Cambridge.

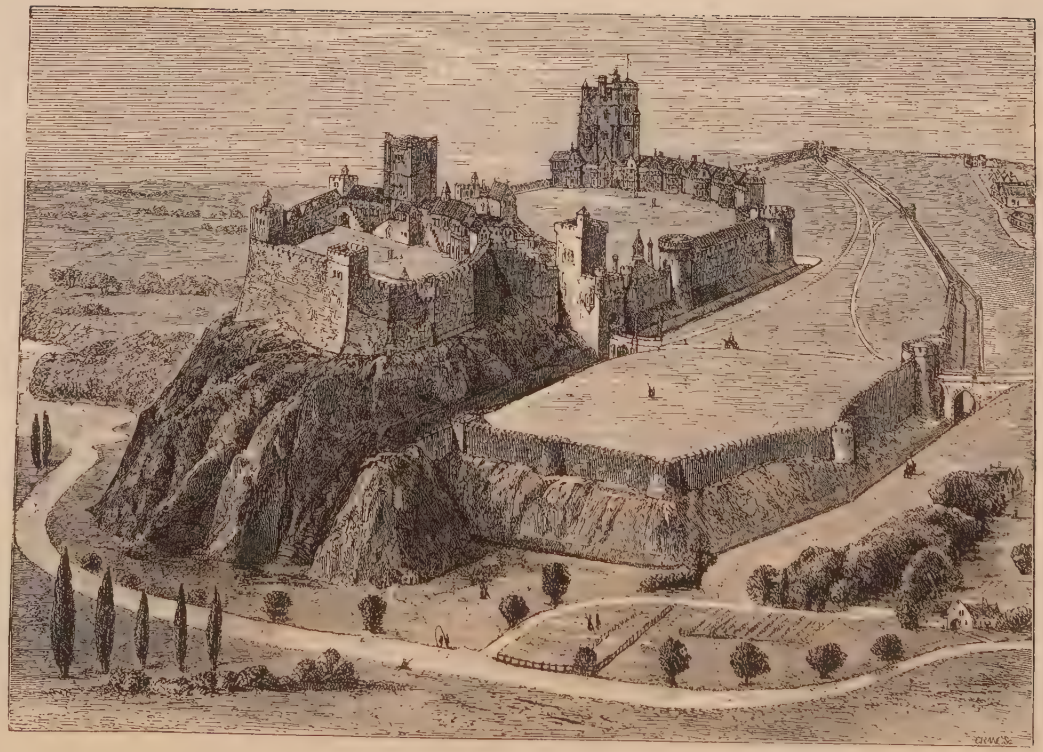
We next hear of Richard at Stamford, whence he proceeded to Nottingham. Between March and September he visited Scarborough, York, Durham, and other towns when, his military survey completed, he made Nottingham his headquarters. The selection of this town was probable due to its central situation. The southern coast was the best defended, and it was impossible to foresee at what point the anticipated attempt at invasion would be made. Hence his frequent residences in Nottingham, whose strongly fortified castle he had occupied in former days when warden of the Northern Marches. He pushed forward the works commenced in August, especially the tower, which with pathetic appropriateness he called "The Castle of Care." ‡

In the arrangements which Richard made for the rapid conveyance of intelligence we may trace the origin of the postal service, by the marvellous development of which, in our own times, letters are conveyed within twelve hours from London to the remotest and most isolated hamlets in the land,

* "First General Report of the Commissioners for the Preservation of Public Records," p. 192.

† This grant was withdrawn in the first year of Henry VII. See "First Report Hist. MSS. Com.," p. 73.

‡ Hutton's "Bosworth Field."



NOTTINGHAM CASTLE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

(*From the Illustrated London News.*)

and a halfpenny postage-stamp will carry a newspaper six thousand miles, to the log-hut of the settler at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. For Richard's postal service, unlike that of Edward IV., or such as had existed on the principal trunk roads of the Roman Empire from the time of Augustus, was not confined to the business of the State. If, practically, it became so, it was because very few people in his day were able to write or even to read.

The facilities afforded by the posts for the transmission of news and of private letters, must be reckoned amongst the causes which led the common people in the succeeding reign to value primary education, and prepared the way for the Reformation. At every twentieth mile along all the principal roads from south, east, and west, a horseman was stationed ready to mount on the arrival of his comrade. News could thus be conveyed to Nottingham from either coast in less than sixty hours; and that, not by the doubtful significance of the beacon, but by letter transmitted from hand to hand. In Henry VII's. time this system of relays of horses, which gave efficiency to the service, was discontinued. It was revived by Henry VIII., who endeavoured to maintain the posts in a state of efficiency, and instituted the office of "Master of the Postes," with entire control of the department.*

The royal revenues did not respond to the royal necessities. Their increase had become a matter of primary necessity, and this the King sought, in the first instance, to secure by greater vigilance in their collection. He was naturally averse to imposing new taxes, which the loss of the French tribute

* "Her Majesty's Mails," by William Lewin, p. 6.

rendered necessary, and without which it was impossible to maintain the defences of the country. Consequences more disastrous than the discontent which direct taxation would have stimulated, were involved in the temporising policy of procrastination.

Richard's first visit to Nottingham was on the 20th of March, and it was prolonged to the end of the following month. The natural strength of the castle—which is almost coeval with English history—rendered it a fortress of the first importance. Upon its site Alfred the Great was defeated in 868, in his attempt to wrest the primeval fortress from the Danes. It was rebuilt by William the Conqueror. Besieged and captured by Richard I. in 1194, it again fell into the hands of King John who, in 1212, hung upon its ramparts twenty-eight Welsh hostages on the outbreak of a fresh revolt in Wales. During the Wars of the Roses it was occupied alternately by the Yorkists and Lancastrians.

Edward IV. enlarged and strengthened the castle, which became his favourite residence. Richard now extended and adorned it, most of all with the tower, which, in its ruin, still bears his name. There is no spot in England more intimately associated with the memory of Richard III., none of the many castles which he built, or extended, which more merits Leland's description: "That north part is an exceeding piece of work." Here he had brought his bridal duchess; hence he had issued orders for his gorgeous reception as King, at York; here he had issued his proclamation against Buckingham; here he had now to encounter the keenest sorrow of his life; and hence he was destined to march, in all the proud panoply of war, to defeat and death.

Little more than a month had elapsed since Richard had caused the lords spiritual and temporal to swear allegiance to his only legitimate son, Prince Edward, as heir apparent to the throne. Three weeks later, he had received intelligence of the death, at Middleham, of the young Prince in whom all his hopes centred. His grief, and that of the Queen, were intensified by the suddenness of the occurrence, which deprived them of the opportunity of soothing by their presence the last moments of the child they so passionately loved.* The Croyland Chronicler tells us that, on hearing the news, "his father and mother were in a state almost bordering on madness, by reason of their sudden grief." The young Prince died on the 9th of April, the anniversary of the death of Edward IV., a circumstance remarkable as a coincidence, though it is beneath the dignity of history to parade it, as has been done, as a "retributive providence."

A fortnight's inactivity at Nottingham confirms the reports of the almost paralysing grief to which the King and Queen abandoned themselves. It was the one heart-sorrow of Richard's life; irreparable, and fatal to those cherished schemes in pursuit of which he had quailed before no danger, and committed heinous crimes. The stern man, who had circumvented every human foe, is at last himself circumvented by that enemy of all living who had hitherto fought on his side. Death had robbed him of the mainspring of all his actions, of the one staff on which he leaned—his only hope of perpetuating his race.

* "In "King Richard's Journal" we meet with the following entry concerning the Prince: "Whose excellent wit and remarkable endowments of nature wherewith (his young age considered) he is singularly furnished, do

The Prince was the sickly issue of an unnatural marriage between first cousins. With the exception of his visit to York, he does not appear to have taken part in any of the Court pageantries, nor to have enjoyed the society of his parents since their coronation. He was domiciled at Middleham, the ancestral home of his mother. The prudence of the King is apparent in this arrangement, and the boy's health, and moral and religious training, were objects of his constant solicitude. He appears to have occupied himself during the progress to York in the preceding autumn, in drawing up an elaborate plan for the regulation of his establishment at Middleham; for the Ordinance is dated the 24th of July, as nearly as can be ascertained, the very day on which More represents him to have despatched Sir James Tyrell on his murderous errand to the Tower. The document is interesting not only, nor even chiefly, as an illustration of that energy of character which enabled Richard, amidst a whirl of excitement, and occupations of an urgent and exhausting nature, to concentrate his mind upon domestic duties. It also affords a valuable revelation of moral character. A "Dombey" in real life is impossible. If ever a man wears his heart upon his sleeve it is in his dealings with and for his children. That strong domestic affection, which characterised all the family of York, was especially marked in Richard, and was at its best in all that related to his only son. The reference to the "children" in this Ordinance has been held, quite gratuitously, to show that Richard's illegitimate children were domiciled with the Prince at Middleham.* The young Earl

portend to us great and undoubted hopes, by the favour of God, that he will make a good man."

* There is no reason to suppose that Richard had more than the one

of Warwick, son of the Duke of Clarence, was his cousin's companion, and we need go no further for an explanation of the phrase. The Earl of Lincoln, son of the Duke of Suffolk, appears to have been Governor of the Household.

The Ordinance contains fourteen items; the first providing "that the hours of God's service (in other words family worship), diet, going to bed and rising, and also shutting of the gates be at reasonable time and hours convenient." A monthly report of the expenses of the household is to be rendered to a member of the council; due discipline is to be observed; the "children" are to breakfast together, and to dine not later than eleven o'clock; and directions are given for the provisioning of the household. Then follows an instruction which shows that jealous care for the public revenue of which we have seen other illustrations, but which is here enforced in his own household:

"Item: the costs of my Lord of Lincoln, when he rideth to sessions, or any meetings appointed by the council, the treasurer to pay for meat and drink.

"Item: at all other ridings, huntings, and disports, my said lord to be at his own costs and charges." Sundry other directions follow, having reference mainly to the servants, and the last runs thus:

"Item: that convenient fare be ordained for the household servants, and *strangers to fare better than others.*" *

illegitimate son, who was knighted at York in September, 1483. He is said to have witnessed the battle of Bosworth Field, and finding himself wholly unprovided for, to have apprenticed himself to a bricklayer. According to another report, he hid himself, and became a day labourer in Kent, where he lived unknown and bearing another name. Probably both stories are apocryphal though Hutton says that the latter "is testified by some memoirs preserved in the Winchelsea family."

* Harl. MSS., No. 433.

The mind that dictated such domestic arrangements was eminently just, considerate, and regardful of the duties of religion, whilst the generosity of the last clause is in advance of the standard of hospitality in that or any later age.

The bitterness of the King's bereavement was intensified by the irony of fate which required him to name, as his adopted heir, the son of his brother Clarence. He thus virtually admitted the injustice of that attainder which he had accomplished with relentless determination. For this information, which shows how ill-founded are the stories of his cruelty to this youth, we are indebted to Rous, a rabid Lancastrian. "It has," says Horace Walpole, "been maliciously suppressed, or ignorantly omitted by all our historians."

Richard had no time to indulge a morbid grief. "Being a man," says his biographer, "of equal moderation to his courage, he puts it into the scale of his other worldly encounters . . . and so tempered his griefe and businesse together that the one made himself not insensible, nor the other negligent, but as the Prior of Croyland telleth, did all things gravely and discreetly as before." *

It will be remembered that in the outbreak preceding the death of Edward IV., the Duke of Gloucester had terminated a successful Scottish campaign, not indeed by a treaty with the dilettante James III., but with the nobles who, led by Angus, after hanging the obnoxious advisers of their Sovereign, had shut him up in Edinburgh Castle. The authority of James had been yet further ignored by the treaty concluded at Westminster, between Edward IV. and the rebel Duke of Albany,

* Buck, p. 554.

whose pretensions to the throne of Scotland were sedulously encouraged by Edward.

But the objection of the Scots were less to James III. than to his advisers, whom having hung, they showed no disposition to depose their King. On the contrary, James gradually recovered his power, and in the summer of 1483 the Duke of Albany was attainted by the Scottish Parliament. Relying upon the recognition of his claims by the English Court, Albany surrendered his castle of Dunbar, though he must have known his countrymen too well to suppose that his allies would find it easy to hold the fortress. It was immediately besieged by the Scotch army, and a letter written by Bishop Langton at the time of Richard's visit to York in the following September shows that the siege was not even then raised. "The Kyng of Scots," he writes, "hath sent a curteys and a wise leter to the Kyng for his cace, but I trow ye shal undirstond thai shal have a sit up or ever the Kyng departe fro York. Thai ly styl at the seige of Dunbar, but I trust to God it shalbe kept fro thame." *

Richard responded to overtures from the Scottish King in a letter couched in friendly terms.† Endorsing the regret expressed by King James that "in tyme past thenterupcion, breche, and disturbance of peas betwixt both realmes hath proven through the meanes of evyll disposed persones," he protests his desire for peace: "We acertaine you our mynde and disposission is and ever shalbe confirmable to the will and pleasur of God our aller Creatour in all reasonable and

* "Christchurch Letters," quoted by Mr. Gairdner.
† Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 247.

convenient peax, without fenying." He concludes by offering a safe conduct for the Scottish Commissioners.* The negotiations which followed were languidly conducted and speedily fell through. Meanwhile the siege of Dunbar Castle continued, and Richard openly gave assistance to the Duke of Albany and the banished Earl of Douglas. For twelve months the war went on. Albany was once more a fugitive in England, whilst Douglas, less fortunate, was taken prisoner by the Scots. King James showed his clemency by condemning him to perpetual seclusion in a monastery.

The war continued by sea and land, and there is reason to believe that Richard's visit to Scarborough, early in July, was for the purpose of inspecting his fleet, since he signed a warrant at York on the 21st of that month "for victualling the King's ships at Scarborough." The following proclamation, issued immediately before he left London on this northern journey, indicates the dangers to which the Scottish war exposed the commercial enterprise of the country:

1484 23 Feb. To all maner owners, maisters, and mariners of the naveye of our counties of Norffolk and Suffolk, aswele fisshers as other, entending to departe into the parties of Island, and to every of them, greting:

"Forasmoche as we understande that certain of you entende hastely to departe towardes Island, not purveied of waughters for your suertie in that behalve; we, for certain grete causes and consideracions us moving, woll and straitly charge you, alle and every of you, that ye ne noon of you severally depart out of any of our havens of this our realme, towards the said

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 53.

parties of Island, without our license furst had soo to do; and thereupon, that ye gathre and assemble your selff in such one of our havens or portes in our said counties of Norfolk and Suffolk as ye shall thinke most convenient, wele harnyssed and apparelled for your owne suertie, and soo for to departe alle togeder toward Humbre, to attende there upon our shippes of Hull as you waughters, for the sueretie of you all; and that ye dessevere not without tempest of weder compelle you, but that ye keep you togeder, as well going into the said parties as in your retorne unto this our realme, without any wilfull breche to the contrarie, upon payn of forfaiture of your shippes and goodes in the same.

"Yoven, &c., the xxiii day of February, anno primo." *

Never before or since Richard's time, did Iceland attract so much attention. Several licenses were granted by the King both to individuals and to companies trading there. The fact is noticed by Christopher Columbus, who says: "To this island, which is as large as England, the English carry on trade." But neither Columbus nor other writers give any indication of the nature of a trade which must have been lucrative, since it was carried on at serious risk, and was certainly extensive.

Richard was always careful to maintain the efficiency of his navy; and never had it been so necessary as now to strengthen this arm of the public service. From Plymouth to Berwick French ships scoured the ocean and watched the coasts. The northern fleet had recently obtained a signal victory over that of James III.; but on returning to Scar-

* "Letters of Richard III.," vol. ii., p. 287.

borough, probably at the very time of the King's visit, it had met with a disaster which went far to neutralise the moral effect of victory. Several vessels were captured by the French cruisers, and with them Sir Thomas Everingham and John Nesfield, Esquire, both of them men who stood high in the King's confidence.*

Everything pointed to the necessity of terminating the war with Scotland. The recent brilliant successes at sea enabled Richard to offer peace upon honourable terms, and of these King James eagerly availed himself.

Early in August, Richard returned to London. His partiality for his northern subjects; the long period during which the Court had been absent from London; and the discontinuance of that prodigal expenditure upon the royal household which had characterised his pleasure-loving brother, tended to induce in the minds of the citizens a certain sympathy with the discontent prevailing elsewhere. Commercial prosperity was also checked by the unfriendly relations subsisting between this country and France. At this precise moment messengers arrived from the French King, soliciting a safe conduct for ambassadors to treat for peace! Such a request would at any time have met with a ready response from Richard; at this particular juncture it was not the less eagerly embraced that its insincerity was recognised.

The gloom which had overspread the metropolis was thus in a measure relieved. Richard had also in other ways diverted the attention of the citizens. With a view of giving employment to the industrious, he effected large alterations in

* See "Croyland Chronicle," p. 497.

Windsor Castle, Baynard's Castle, and the palace at Westminster.* The Tower and other public buildings were repaired, and a high stone tower erected at Westminster. We have already noticed the care which the King took to provide the best materials for his architectural works. Unfortunately they were not executed without the employment of enforced labour, which was impressed alike for military and civil purposes.† There are several of these warrants in the Harleian MSS. One was issued from Scarborough on the 22nd of May, 1884. "Warrant to aid and assist Richard Gough, in taking on the King's name (as well within liberties as without) wheat, beer, fish, flesh, souldeours, mariners, artificers, labourers, carts, boats, and all other stuff as horses, waynes, and all such timber and stones as he shall think necessary for the King's use." ‡

Richard was too clear-sighted to anticipate any satisfactory issue to the French King's overtures for peace. It was so much the more important to carry the negotiations with Scotland to a successful close. For this purpose he now hurried back to Nottingham. An embassy, composed of "Coline erle of Ergile, lord Campbell Lorne," then Chancellor of Scotland, "a reverend fader in God William bisshop of Abberdene," and five other plenipotentiaries of high rank

* Leland tells us that Richard III. adapted his castles to the use of artillery. Thus in altering the north part of Warwick Castle he "beganne and half finished a mighty towre, or strength, for to shoote out gunnes."—LELAND, *Itin.*, vol. iv., p. 163.

† Whilst it is true that Richard "pressed labour at his pleasure," little real hardship resulted. Men were paid a *viaticum* on coming to or going from their work, at so much per mile of distance. Only in very exceptional cases were they removed to any great distance from their homes, and their labour was liberally remunerated. See "English Chronicle," Cam. Soc., p. 329.

‡ Harl. MSS., 433, fols. 174, 179.

was entrusted with powers for the conclusion of peace,* and were received by Richard at Nottingham on the 12th of September. The English Commissioners were fifteen in number, amongst them being the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Stanley, the Bishops of Lincoln and St. Asaph, Sir Richard Ratcliffe, and William Catesby.

When both parties to the negotiations were bent upon bringing them to a successful issue, the result could not be uncertain. The object on both sides was to consolidate the amity between the two countries. Archdeacon Whitelaw, King James' secretary, opened the proceedings in a speech of polished Latin, addressed to Richard, to whom he appropriately applied "what was said by the poet of a most renowned prince of the Thebans, that 'nature never enclosed within a smaller frame so great a mind or such remarkable powers.'"† The result of the conference was a three years' truce, and a treaty of marriage designed to unite the families of the two Kings. Richard's niece, Anne de la Pole, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, was affianced to the eldest son of James III. This marriage never took effect, although Richard's prudent policy eventually triumphed. In the following reign, James IV. of Scotland married the daughter of Henry VII., and the whole island thus became united under one Sovereign, in the person of their great-grandson, James VI. of Scotland and I. of England.

It is interesting to notice, as a trait of character, that on the 18th of September, whilst the negotiations with the

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 60.

* "Nunquam tantum animum Natura minori corpore, nec tantas visa est includere vires."

Scottish Commissioners were in progress, Richard finds time to plead the cause of an injured woman. On that date he addressed the following letter to the Mayor of York:

"Trusty and well beloved we greet you well, letting you know that grievous complaint hath been made unto us, on behalf of our poor subject Katherine Basingbourne, of an injury to be done unto her by one Henry Fawcet. . . . Wherefore we willing in that behalf the administration of justice, whereunto we be professed, and also trusting in your wisdom" (desire you to examine into the matter and) "calling the parties before you, set such final direction to the same, as shall accord with our laws of good conscience." *

This generous interposition of the King on behalf of an oppressed woman of humble rank, is in harmony with that chivalrous bearing towards the weaker sex which we have already noticed.†

It is not a little remarkable that one of the personal enemies with whom Richard found it most difficult to deal was a woman—the notorious Jane Shore. It was about this time ‡ that Lord Chancellor Russell was employed in a delicate negotiation with her, the result of which is unrecorded, but which there is reason to believe issued in her liberation. This celebrated beauty had been one of the mistresses of Edward IV., after whose death Lord Hastings had taken her under his protection. For her treasonable intercourse with the Queen-mother and her brother the Marquis of Dorset, Richard had caused her to be prosecuted on a charge

* Davies' "York Records," p. 190.

† Harl. MSS., cod. 433, art. 433.

‡ As we judge from the expression, "*our coming next to London,*" in the subjoined letter.

of adultery and witchcraft, her husband, a goldsmith of Lombard Street, being plaintiff in the action. She had been found guilty, sentenced to penance, and imprisoned in Ludgate, where she had now lain upwards of twelve months. If we accept Sir Thomas More's statement that the Council had delivered her over to the Bishop of London, "because they would do something to satisfy" the King,* it must be admitted that responsibility for her subsequent treatment rested upon them. Moreover, there is evidence only, if at all, short of being conclusive, that Mistress Shore had been divorced from her husband. In this case a scandal, such as Richard could not afford to provoke, would have resulted from any attempt on his part to rescue her from the grip of a merciless ecclesiastical law.

But the question of Richard's tyranny in this case is decided by evidence that is unimpeachable. Whilst confined in Ludgate, Jane Shore had captivated Thomas Lynom, the King's solicitor, who "was so smitten with her pretty foot, cherry lip, bonny eye, and passing pleasing tongue," that he offered her marriage. He, at all events, must have known something of the King's temper, and had Richard been the tyrannical monster depicted by More, Lynom would assuredly have shared the captivity of his fair charmer. How the King

* More, in Kennett, p. 496. As usual More's statements are open to the gravest question. In his proclamation Richard had—probably with good reason—shifted his charge of Jane Shore's treasonable intercourse from Hastings to the Marquis of Dorset. More is therefore wrong as to the cause of her being condemned to open penance. He is almost certainly equally wrong as to the author of this severe but just sentence. It hardly admits of doubt that its real author was the Bishop of London. All that can be alleged against Richard is that he allowed the Church to proceed further than he would have gone in resenting treason which was no longer dangerous.

dealt with the matter is shown in a letter addressed by him to the Lord Chancellor, which is still preserved in the British Museum :

"Right reverend fadre in God, etc.,

"Signifying unto you that it is shewed unto us that our servant and sollicitor, Thomas Lynom, marvillously blinded and abused with the late (wife) of Willm. Shore, now being in Ludgate by oure commandment, hath made contract of matrymony with hir (as it is said) and entendith, to our full grete marveile, to procede to the effect of the same. We for many causes wold be sory that hee soo shulde be disposed. Pray you therefore to send for him, and in that ye goodly may, exhorte and stirre hym to the contrarye. And if ye finde him utterly set for to marye hur, and noen otherwise will be advertised, then (*if it may stand with the lawe of the churche.*) We be content (the tyme of mariage deferred to our comyng next to London) that upon sufficient suertie founde of hure good abering, ye doo send for hure keeper, and discharge him of onr said commandment by warrant of these, committing hur to the rule and guiding of hure fadre, or any othre by your discretion in the mene season. Yeven, &c." *

Is this the letter of a tyrant? On the contrary, it shows us the loyal son of the Church, careful above all things to do nothing contrary to her laws and discipline; the considerate master, concerned that his servant should disgrace himself by

* Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," vol. i., p. 350; Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 340.

marriage with a woman who had done public penance, and using all legitimate means of dissuasion; a wise and merciful Sovereign, not only liberating his prisoner, but providing that she should be committed to the custody of her father; and sanctioning a distasteful match, to prevent which it was only requisite that he should do nothing.

But there is reason to believe that the Churchmen, who imposed the public penance upon their unhappy victim, were able to defeat the King's merciful designs. For, although Jane Shore lived to the eighteenth year of Henry VIII., we hear nothing of her marriage, but, on the contrary, she is spoken of as Mistress Shore to the last.

The comparative calmness of the political atmosphere, during the King's sojourn in the metropolis, was favourable to the carrying out of a long-cherished purpose to transfer the remains of Henry VI. to their proper resting-place amongst his ancestors. With all the solemnity befitting the occasion the temporary tomb in Chertsey was opened, and the coffin, containing all that was mortal of the saintly King, was conveyed to the Collegiate Church at Windsor. If Richard had been accessory to the King's death, this was a gratuitous challenge to those who reverenced his memory to renew their accusations. It was an act which appealed to the sympathies not only of the spectators, who were few, but of the people at large, whose imagination must have dwelt affectionately upon the beloved monarch. It was an act of piety, deliberately performed, to secure to the people facilities for gratifying a universal desire to make pilgrimages to the shrine of the saintly King. It is inconceivable how party malignity could distort Richard's motives, when the very men by whom they

were impugned had themselves described Chertsey as "certainly hidden and remote from the common access of the public, and not fit for the sepulchre of so great a King." * Yet his enemies, in their unrelenting and unreasoning efforts to find evidence of crime in his every act, have professed to detect it in this invitation to pay honour to the memory of the deceased monarch. It is true that the act was applauded in Richard's lifetime. Long years after his death, Lancastrian malignity invented the fiction that this mark of respect to the remains of Henry VI. was the result of envy of that King's sanctity. The unavowed purpose, according to these writers, was at once to expiate crime and to arrest the number of pilgrimages to Henry's tomb. To such depths did political rancour descend in the sixteenth century.

Richard has been accused, and with some reason, of introducing an austerity into the Court which was reflected in society, contrasting with the splendid frivolity of the Court of Edward IV. A warrant issued by the King on the 7th of May illustrates not only this fact, but also a change in the national habits which is deserving of attention. The mandate issued to his bailiffs prohibits playing at cards, dice, quoits, and tennis, and enjoins the practice of "the lawful game" of shooting (archery).† The people were becoming less warlike. The spirit of chivalry was on the wane. It had been the vivifying soul of that feudal system which Richard had shaken to its foundations. Its doctrines, however unsuited to modern society, were all founded on generosity and self-denial; and as these virtues lost their hold upon "those grosser characters

* Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 576.

† Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 215.

who centred their sum of happiness in procuring the personal objects on which they had fixed their own exclusive attachment,"* its very forms fell into disuse if not contempt. The fact was observed by Caxton, who bitterly inveighs against the decadence of chivalry. For a thousand years the order of knighthood had been the eagerly coveted prize, for which King, and noble, and commoner might contend, the support of the monarchy, the seal of merit, and the source of England's reputation throughout Christendom. Now, gentlemen and even esquires, who had graduated in the orders of chivalry, avoided its imposition. In anticipation of the coronation of Edward V. Richard had been compelled to issue an order, in the young King's name, to those gentlemen who had the requisite £40 a year, to come to London to receive the disparaged dignity of knighthood.

If we would inquire into the causes of the decadence of the spirit of chivalry, we must look beyond the growth of the commercial spirit, with its personal objects and exclusive attachments. Under a Sovereign such as Edward IV. the very fount of knighthood was deeply tainted. In the zenith of chivalry, purity of heart was the distinctive characteristic of the knight who enlisted in defence of right against wrong, truth against falsehood, honour against dishonour.

> My good blade carves the helms of men,
> My tough lance thrusteth sure;
> My strength is as the strength of ten,
> *Because my heart is pure.*

There were no Sir Galahads amongst the chivalry of Edward IV., when "gentlemanly perjury" was the fashion

* Sir Walter Scott, Introduction to "Quentin Durward."

of the day, and King and Court were steeped in licentiousness. To this fact, perhaps more than to any other, must be assigned the growing contempt for an order which had ceased to symbolise purity, and truth, and honour.

The discountenance of effeminate and vicious games by Richard was designed to check this reaction against the spirit and pursuits of chivalry. It was, moreover, a matter of the very first moment to the country that the common practice of "shooting with arrows" should not fall into desuetude. Gunpowder had indeed been introduced into English warfare, but the long bow was still the weapon of national defence. It must be admitted that Richard's austerity was not of a very severe type. Licentiousness, indeed, hid its face in his Court and in his pastimes. No bevy of ladies accompanied him, as they had been wont to accompany Edward IV., to the chase, to shoot at the noble animals driven past their tent-door for the purpose, and to amuse the King, who "at their departing gave unto them great plenty."* But Richard had as great a passion for "the noble science" as his brother, the difference between them being that Richard made his amusements subordinate to his duties to the State. Falconry and hawking were also favourite pursuits which Richard shared with the knights and ladies of his Court. He had a "Sergeant of the Falcons" in England, and there are also grants "to the Master of the King's Hawks."

Amongst the amusements of Richard's leisure hours a prominent place was assigned to reading. He thus acquired

* Fabyan, p. 667.

that matured acquaintance with the principles of law and commerce, which he employed in the service of the State, and that knowledge of architecture, which he loved to carry into practice both in public and private works. He was also passionately fond of music, especially of a warlike character, and men and boys were impressed for service to gratify his tastes. The hardship was probably not great, indeed so liberally did Richard pay his minstrels that the post must have been an enviable one. "In those days," says Hearn, "they payd theyre minstrells better than theyre preistes." * To several, Richard gave annuities, and the fame of his patronage of the fascinating art reaching other lands, he was visited by minstrels from foreign countries. But the interval of repose in which the King could abandon himself to these refining and elevating pursuits was brief, and we must turn now to a less agreeable aspect of his affairs.

* "Liber Niger Scaccarii," p. 598.

CHAPTER V.

Much obloquy has been attached to the memory of Richard III. for the execution of William Colyngbourne, which took place on Tower Hill about the end of July. It has been assumed that he was the victim of the King's resentment of the political sarcasm which he had indiscreetly attached to the doors of St. Paul's Church. Nothing that political venom or injustice could invent could be more untrue. He was arrested on undoubted proof of treasonable practices, which he found means to carry on during his imprisonment. He died, deservedly, the death of a traitor; and if the harrowing cruelty of the means by which his just sentence was carried out evoked, as Fabyan tells us, "the compassion of much people," and excites disgust, it is to the law and not to the King, who was away in the north, that objection should be taken.* He was executed, says Cornwallis, "for treason against the state, not for that silly, ridiculous libell, for neither any of his faction can prove that ever he revenged

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* Even Mr. Sharon Turner repeats the calumny that Richard "had one Colyngbourne executed as a traitor for writing this distich:

"The Cat, the Rat, and Lovell the Dog
Rule all England under the Hog."

Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 494.

aney injurie whatsoever that was done to himself: for the good and safety of his kingdom he was zealous." *

In the autumn of this year we hear of disturbances at Bedford, where Lancastrian sympathies were paramount. The chroniclers are silent concerning it, but a proclamation preserved in the Harleian MSS. gives us one of those few glimpses of Richard's internal administration for which we search the histories in vain. As we have already seen, he had, in the preceding March, issued instructions to the magistrates of the southern counties to forbid the wearing of liveries and cognizances. The prohibition did not, perhaps, extend to the Midlands, for, on the 26th September, the following Proclamation against Retainders was published at Bedford:

"Richard, etc. To the maior and baillieffes of our towne of Bedford, greting. Forasmoche as we understande that by reteindres, othes, yeving of liveres, clothinges, signes and cognissances of tymes past within our said towne, great divisions and debates have growen and ensued amonges our subgiettes and inhabitauntes of the same, not oonly to the gret perturbance and subversion of our peax and good rule to be had and continued there, but also in manifest contempt of oure lawes in that behalve ordeigned and provided: We, entending love, peax, and unite to be continued and establisshed within our said towne for the universalle wele of the same, woll and commande you to make open proclamacions in places convenient and accustumed there, charging stractly on our behalve that from hensforth noon of thinhabitauntes within the same take or receive any reteyndors, liveres,

* "Encomium of Richard III.," by William Cornewaleys, p. 9.

clothinges, or coignisaunce of any parsone or parsonnes of what estate, degre, or condicion soever they be, and if any of thaym woll of presumpcion or wilfulnesse attempte the contrary of this oure commaundement, we woll that ye committe him or thaim soo doing unto suer and sauf warde, soo to remayne unto the tyme ye shall knowe and understande our ferther pleasure in that partie. . . ." *

The proclamation was offensive to those against whom it was aimed. It was an act of patriotism and of courage, "necessary to the peace and improvement of the country." The throne was endangered by the number of trained retainers whom the disaffected barons and gentry could at the shortest notice bring together under the family livery. The evil had become so great that nothing short of the abolition of the privilege could now hold it in check. The barons were tenacious of their ancient rights. The rights and interests of the community had no more place in their thoughts than they appear to have in those of their descendants to-day. They offered a determined resistance to this attempt to curb their power, and cherished a secret enmity against the King who had made it. "He was becoming too good a King to suit their interests." †

Three months later we find a similar proclamation addressed to the city of Gloucester, which is doubly interesting, as showing the continued prevalence of disaffection in the southern counties, and that benevolence of character which frequently led the King to interest himself in the welfare of the humblest individuals.‡ No estimate of the character of Richard can be

* "Letters of Richard III.," vol. ii., p. 288.

† Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 568. ‡ Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 126 b.

even approximately correct which ignores—as do all the old chroniclers—the many trustworthy indications, which patient research brings to light, of this jealous regard for the rights of individuals, and concern for the impartial administration of justice.

In December, 1484, a constable of Gloucester received some injury in the discharge of his duties. Whilst Richard seizes the opportunity to repeat his prohibition of the wearing of any livery or cognizance except his own, it is noteworthy that he commiserates the unfortunate man and directs the proper punishment of his assailants. In a letter addressed to the chief officers at Gloucester, he says that many divisions have grown up in divers places "by means of retainders, and receiving and wearing of liveries" contrary to law, "and especially now of late among you within our said town by evil disposed gentlemen . . . . in making assault upon our officers, a constable of our said town was not only beaten and grievously maimed, but also partly in despair of his life, as it is to us shewed to our full great displeasure." They are charged to retain the assailants in custody, not admitting them to bail, until the King's pleasure should be known. "And over this that ye in no wise henceforth suffer any person dwelling among you in our said town and franchise, for to use, wear livery of clothing, ... or other cognizance of the gift of any manner of person . . . . but only ours . . . . and if ye shall know any presuming, or attempting so to do, that ye forthwith commit him in likewise to sure prison."*

One more illustration may be given of this feature of

* See Buck, in Kennett, vol. i., p. 576.

Richard's character. In October, 1484, instructions were addressed by the King to Sir Marmaduke Constable, Steward of the Manor of Tutbury, against the extortion of bailiffs, in which the following passage occurs. "Where heretofore diverse extorcions and oppressions have ben doon by the countie baillieffes, upon trust that they shuld contynue and not to be removed from their offices, the King wolle that from hencefurth the said Sir Marmaduc put able and wele-disposed persones in the said bailliefwykes, suche as been sufficient to answere the King of his dutie; and they to be chaunged from yere to yere and that a proclamacion to be made at every gret court that if any persone wolle come and complayn of any of the said baillieffes that they shalbe herd, and due reformacion and punyshement be had according to the Kinges laws and their demerits."*

Richard's acts were such that his most virulent detractors, unable wholly to ignore them, were constrained to impute evil motives. "He counterfeited," says Grafton, "the image of a good and well-disposed person." The same spirit of impartiality appears in the King's Regulations for the Council of the North, of which the Earl of Lincoln was President, given at York in July of this year.

"Furst, the King wolle that none lord ne other persone appoynted to be of his counselle, for favor, affeccion, hate, malice, or mede, do ne speke in the counselle otherwise than the King's lawes and good conscience shalle require, but be indifferent, and no wise parcell, as ferr as his wit and reason woll geve him, in all maner maters that shalbe mynestred

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 79.

afore theym. Item, that if there be any mater in the said counselle moved which toucheth any lord or other persone of the said counselle, than the same lord or persone in no wise to syt or remayn in the said counselle during the tyme of thexamynasion and ordering of the said mater enlesse he be called, and that he obeie and be ordured therein by the remnant of the said counsell." *

Richard had learnt by experience that neither vigilance at home, nor careful watchfulness of his enemies abroad, could be safely relaxed. Through his spies in Brittany, he was informed that the drooping spirits of the Lancastrians there had been revived by encouragements from their adherents in England, whose activity was incessant. In his successful negotiations with the Scottish Commissioners he had earned the gratitude of his subjects. If he was feared rather than loved, it was at least hoped that his vigilance, and the prestige acquired in council and in war, would strike terror into the hearts of his foreign foes, and that a prolonged peace might still be possible. This hope acquired confirmation from the conclusion of a new treaty of peace and amity with Francis, Duke of Brittany, signed at Nottingham in October. By this instrument the Duke, whilst refusing to surrender the Earl of Richmond, agreed to extend to him no further protection or aid.

The popular sentiment was in Richard's favour, when, "in Michaelmas term," he returned to London for the winter. It was recognised by all who were not blinded by faction that he desired, without distinction, to redress grievances and heal the

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., p. 67.

hurts of a distracted country, to make his rule beneficial rather through the exaltation of righteousness and mercy, than through that violence and punishment which long habit had led his subjects to regard as the synonym of sovereignty.

The citizens of London, though always favourable to the House of York, were moved by curiosity and a love of Court pageantry, rather than profoundly in earnest. The mayor and aldermen clad in scarlet, with over four hundred citizens in violet, met the royal *cortége* at Kennington, and conducted the King through the City to a mansion that had been prepared for him at Blackfriars. The populace, though friendly, betrayed an absence of enthusiasm which Richard was quick to detect, and which he attributed to the circulation of injurious rumours by his enemies in France. The citizens, he knew, were mildly favourable to him—always on the condition that adherence to his cause seemed sufficiently safe.

Richard was therefore anxious to give the appearance of stability to his government, which the improved relations with France, and the treaties with Scotland and Brittany fully warranted. The comparative austerity which had marked his Court in contrast with that of Edward IV. was relaxed. Sports, in which the people delighted, were patronised. In nothing had Edward IV. more won the affections of the people of London, than in those hunting expeditions in which the civic authorities had been invited to join, and in which the pleasures of the table exceeded those of the chase. Richard had had little or no opportunity of enjoying a sport so congenial to his tastes since his accession. The more willingly did he now gratify that taste, and by his liberal patronage encourage its enjoyment by others. Not less did the noble

art of Falconry engage his attention and secure his liberal support. But both hunting and falconry were the sports of the aristocracy and of the monied classes. The humbler part of the community delighted in bear-baiting, although divorced from the exhilarating sport which their fathers had enjoyed of first catching the bear in his native haunts. The animals were for the most part the property of the Crown, the subordinate keepers being licensed to travel through the country with them. Whether the royal rights had not been respected, or, owing to whatever other causes this favourite sport had been restricted, does not appear; but the fact that Richard issued letters to the mayors and sheriffs throughout the kingdom, requiring them to *protect* the "said game" as well as the licensed exhibitors,* suggests that he thus intended to restore to the people the free enjoyment of their sports.

The King had been but a few weeks in London when information reached him which justified his misgivings as to the sincerity of the French King. In Windsor and other towns seditious manifestoes appeared, instigated by "false inventions, tidings, and rumours," emanating from the confederates in France. Accordingly, on the 6th of December, Richard addressed a letter to the Mayor of Windsor ordering him to check such attempts to foment discord and division between himself and his nobles. The Mayor was instructed to trace them to their source, and to commit "the first utterers thereof" to prison, inflicting severe penalties as a warning to others.

This letter was also published as a royal proclamation in

* Miss Halsted, vol. ii., 364.

other towns, and one of its first consequences was the arrest at Southampton of Sir Robert Clifford. That Sir Robert was a leader of the disaffected party in London does not admit of doubt; but his hasty trial, conviction, and barbarous execution on Tower Hill, won the sympathy of the populace, who attempted a rescue. "When he came to St. Martins," says Fabyan, "by the help of a Friar, who was his confessor, and one of them that was next about him, his cords were so loosed or cut that he put him in devoir to have entered the sanctuary. And likely it had become that he should have done so, had it not been for the quick help and rescue of the Sheriffs and their officers, the which constrained him to lie down upon the hurdle, and newly landed (bound) him, and so hurried him to the said place of execution." *

Edward IV. had hung a grocer for a jest; and Lancastrian historians justify his savage severity, on the ground that punishment "of such saucy language" as the unfortunate man had employed, was "necessary to beget authority." † Richard III. refused to violate the laws of which he was the constitutional administrator, and the full benefit of which was enjoyed by every offender, and the same writers vilify him as a tyrant. "Could he," writes one who was contemporary with both sovereigns, "could he as openly have manifested his other virtues as he did his valour and policy, the world's opinion had been different." ‡

The King had reckoned upon spending a Christmas of undisturbed tranquillity in the midst of a contented people, and finding a solace for his domestic sorrows in the perform-

* Fabyan, p. 671. † Habington, p. 431. ‡ The Cornwallis MS., p. 13.

ance of acts of seasonable charity. His letter to the Mayor of Windsor shows how speedily these hopes had to be abandoned. On the 16th of December, we find him, in accordance with the custom of his day, granting an annuity of £10 for perpetual masses, to be said in St. George's Chapel, in the Castle at Southampton, for the welfare of his soul and the souls of his Consort and the son whom they mourned. The fact is seized upon by his calumniators as new evidence of remorse, and dread of the consequences of his crimes. But if so, Queen Anne and the deceased Prince must be held equally criminal, since they equally shared in the benefits, if any, of the endowment. At various times Richard spent large sums in endowing perpetual masses for the benefit of his family, for whose spiritual welfare he showed, perhaps, more concern than for his own. One instance there is, in which remorse may possibly have influenced his religious offerings. The ill-fated Earl Rivers had suffered imprisonment at Sheriff Hutton, and death at Pontefract. At the former place Richard added £10 a year to the salary of the chantry priest; at the latter he rebuilt the chapel and house of a pious Anchoress. Yet, apart from their association with the fate of Earl Rivers, both places had special claims upon Richard's bounty, which sentiment alone attributes to a remorseful conscience.*

The King's studious habits have already been remarked. It might have seemed difficult for his most envenomed enemies to have found in these evidence of his criminality.

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 119 b. A kindred motive led the King to contribute £40 towards the rebuilding of the church at Barnard's Castle. It is impossible to enumerate such gifts, which were of constant occurrence.

But they have been equal even to this task. He had a habit, says Hall, "when he studied," of playing with the dagger which he wore, plucking it "up and down in the sheathe, to the middle, never drawing it fully out." In this the chroniclers see conclusive evidence that the King's mind was exercised by fear, remorse, and criminal intent. "His fierce nature in his cruel body always chafed, stirred, and was ever unquiet."* It is not a little curious that Sir Walter Scott thus writes of a great contemporary of Richard III. It is of Charles the Bold that he says, he had "a habit when he spoke of either turning up his moustaches or handling his sword or dagger, the last of which *he used frequently to draw a little way, and then return to the sheath.*"† But Sir Walter was not a philosophic historian, neither does he base his diagnosis of character upon a nervous habit.

The same personal and political animosity is apparent in the attempt which has been made to minimise and misrepresent Richard's patronage of letters. It was not the *astronomer*, as his enemies asserted, but the *astrologer*, who, in the person of Lewis Kaerlion, was committed to the Tower for presages designed to encourage sedition. The favour and encouragement which Richard extended to Caxton is not disputed, even by Hall. To him distinctly belongs the credit of having been the first English Sovereign who encouraged literature. At the Court of the Duke of Burgundy, in his early boyhood, and later when sharing his brother's exile, he had doubtless heard the echoes of that marvellous

* Hall, p. 421. † "Quentin Durward," vol. ii., p. 166.

intellectual awakening, which in a few years was to bathe Europe in a flood of light. Caxton was himself employed in the service of his sister the Duchess Margaret of Burgundy. Whilst still Duke of Gloucester, Richard had welcomed his arrival in England, and manifested an interest in his labours. Recognising the value of those new energies, which the minds of his countrymen could not fail to derive from the new learning, which the printing press made accessible to them, he swept from the statute-book every hindrance to its dissemination. It was to this end that he issued an ordinance, to which reference has already been made, enjoining that no statutes should act as a hindrance to "any artificer or merchant stranger, of what nation or country he be, for bringing into this realm, or selling, by retail or otherwise, of any manner of books, written or imprinted." It was probably about Christmas, 1484, that Caxton published his "Order of Chivalry," which he appropriately dedicated to Richard III., whose support, and that of William, Earl of Arundel, alone enabled the great printer to continue his labours in this country.

The attention of the King was soon diverted from these congenial pursuits. His sense of insecurity was shown by a summons, addressed to the knights of the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, and Hertfordshire, to raise and equip the largest possible body of troops against any sudden emergency. Before the end of December similar instructions were issued to commissioners in every shire. Immediately after receipt of their commissions they are to "diligently enquere of alle baillieffes, constables, and other officers . . . within the precincte of theire commission, the nombre of persones suffi-

sauntly horsed, harneysed, and arrayed as by every of theim severelly were graunted to doo the Kinges grace service . . . for the resisting and subduying of his enemyes, rebelles, and traytours; and of the same persones and theire array to take a good vieu and see that they be hable men, and wele horsed and harneysed, and noo rascal, and to endevoire therein to encrease the nombre by theire wisedoms and policies if they can."

They were, further, to prepare the country for a universal conscription: to "yeve straitly in commandment to all knightes, squiers, gentilmen, and othre, being hable men of theire bodyes, to doo the Kinges grace service to prepare and arredy theimself in theire persons soo to doo when they shalbe thereunto warned and commanded without any excuse, as they wil advoyde the Kinges highe displeasire at theire perilles." And, finally, all noblemen, captains, and others, were to be admonished to lay aside all quarrels and differences, and "everyche be loving and assisting to othre in the Kinges quarelles and cause." *

But whilst these instructions bear witness to a general sense of insecurity, the preamble is couched in words which are certainly not those of a King consciously weak in the affections of his people. "First, that they on the King's behalf, thank the people for their true and loving disposition showed to his highness the last year, for the safety and defence of his most royal person, and of this his realm, against his rebels and traitors, exhorting them so to continue." Nor was the response to the extraordinary demand made upon the

* "Letters, etc., of Richard III.," vol. i., pp. 85–7.

nation such as to indicate that the people were not prepared to support their King. Richard's preparations were now complete, and probably no more welcome intelligence could have reached him than that the long-expected invasion was actually imminent. Suspense was demoralising. As to the issue of the conflict Richard was not the man to admit, even to himself, the existence of a doubt. Money, indeed, was wanting, for "the well-filled treasury," which he was said to have inherited from Edward IV., was obviously mythical, and his profuse liberality had permitted no accumulations since his accession. In these circumstances he relied upon expedients for replenishing his exhausted exchequer which, whilst dispensing with parliamentary sanction—which he was under no constitutional obligations to ask—should not be wholly inconsistent with his own condemnation of "benevolences."

From the King's point of view there was not that gloom upon the horizon which historians have discovered in their retrospective view of events, which were then future. Nor does there appear any justification for stigmatising as they have done, as inconsistent and barbarous, the pomp and splendour with which Christmas was celebrated at Westminster.

A trait in Richard's character, which we have already noticed, was his love of music. In this connection, Shakspeare himself might be claimed as his apologist, and universal experience confirms his verdict that no man, in whose soul a love of the divine art dwells is, or can be, irreclaimably vicious. The Harl. MSS. afford numerous proofs of the generous patronage extended by the King to native and foreign musicians. Whether in the cathedral aisle, in the camp, or as now in the quietude of his own palace, Richard always loved to

solace himself with the strains of music. He was also at great pains to ensure the excellence of cathedral and other choirs, and we now meet with another illustration of the despotism of the times which tolerated conscription, for civil as well as for military service.* It is an order empowering "John Melynek, one of the gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, *to take and seize for the King* all such singing men and children, being expert in the science of music, as he can find, and think able to do the King's service within all places in the realm, as well cathedral churches, colleges, chapels, houses of religion, and all other franchised and exempt places, or elsewhere." †

Never before had the vaulted roof of the abbey resounded to such a service of song as Richard had provided for the festival of the Nativity in 1484. In the palace also it was observed "with due solemnity." ‡ On the day of the Epiphany the King appeared, wearing his crown, in Westminster Hall, where the festival was observed "with remarkable splendour," exceeding that of the previous year. The Lancastrian writers, who censure the levity of the King, have no word of condemnation for the family of Edward IV. who, surely, were more worthy of it. Both the ex-Queen and the Princess Elizabeth participated in the splendid festivities, and those who held Richard guilty of the blood of so many of his kinsmen did not fail to notice, as an ominous incident, that Queen Anne and the Princess Elizabeth were attired in robes

* As has been elsewhere observed, Richard liberally remunerated all whose service was constrained. This was especially the case with his minstrels. In a MS. in the possession of the Corporation of New Romney, we meet with such entries as these: "Reward given to the minstrels, 20*d.*; paid to the minstrells, 10*d.*" etc.

† Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 189.

‡ "Croyland Chronicle," p. 498.

equally royal—"changes of dress of the same shape and colour, a thing that caused the people to murmur, and the nobles and prelates greatly to wonder thereat."* Nay, further, we are told that it was said by many "that the King was bent either on the anticipated death of the Queen taking place, or else, by means of a divorce, for which he supposed he had quite sufficient grounds, on contracting a marriage with the said Elizabeth." † These disingenuous words were written when the ecclesiastical lawyer had conceived a violent dislike to Richard III., owing to causes which we shall presently notice. The Princess, betrothed to the Earl of Richmond, was an object of solicitude to her uncle, who kept her in the same real but honourable captivity as he did the young Earl of Warwick at Sheriff Hutton.

We know that Queen Elizabeth had espoused Richard's cause, and sought to persuade her son, the Marquis of Dorset, to return to England and abandon the Earl, to whose betrothal to her daughter she had so recently consented. Richard may have been "over much intent upon singing and dancing and vain changes of dress." Elizabeth can only be exonerated from graver censure, on the assumption that the King had persuaded her that he was not the murderer of her sons; and if one of them yet survived it is conceivable that she was influenced by a natural concern for his interests. Her subsequent countenance of Lambert Simnel affords strong presumptive evidence that she did believe that her second son was still living, a belief which Lord Bacon admits was generally entertained. There is no other explanation of her joining in a plot, the object of which was to overthrow her own daughter.

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 498. † *Ibid.*, p. 499.

At the very height of these Christmas festivities news was brought to the King that, "notwithstanding the potency and splendour of his royal state, his adversaries would, without question, invade the kingdom during the following summer, or make an attempt to invade it." * Prepared as he was to welcome such intelligence, Richard's seeming abandonment to pleasure doubtless veiled an unrest and apprehension, springing from the knowledge that he had more to fear from treason at home, than from all the plotters abroad.† The gentry of the counties were continually going over to the Earl of Richmond, and the numerous recent prosecutions for treason, followed by revolting executions, had created widespread disaffection.‡

Richard was also about to perpetrate an act of despotism upon which he knew that the worst construction would be put. Nothing had gained him more popularity—fleeting though it was—than the abolition of those benevolences which Edward IV. had exacted, and, rather than submit to which the citizens of London, and even Parliament itself, had boldly threatened rebellion. But the necessity of raising a large sum of money was imperious. Uncertainty as to the locality, or even the coast which might be selected for the attempted invasion, rendered it necessary, in order to the general tranquillity, to be prepared at every point. In an evil hour Richard deter-

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 498.

† The King, says Fabyan (p. 518), "was leading his life in great agony and doubt, trusting few of such as were about him."

‡ The fact being reported to Richard, he is said to have made this characteristic reply: "I wold the great Turke were agaynst me, with Prester John, and the Sowdan of Surre, with all theyr powers; for all theyr manhood I wold be Kynge." Harl. MSS., 542. Quoted in Nicholl's "Leicestershire," vol. iv., p. 552.

mined to adopt, with an important modification, the measure of his predecessor. He asked for a loan instead of an absolute gift.* There is no reason to doubt that he intended, and that he believed in his ability, to repay the contributions in two instalments, at twelve and eighteen months. But creditors, especially involuntary creditors, have always shown a propensity which cannot be deemed unreasonable, to give less weight to good intentions than to ability to perform the same. Moreover, this act of the King was open to the very gravest objections. It was clearly unconstitutional, and it was an act of high-handed despotism. The incidence of the tax was capricious and exasperating. In many cases there was no other guarantee for repayment than the King's word, whilst the fact that the exaction was enforced showed that the credit of the Government was at zero. It gave the death-blow to Richard's waning popularity. The impost was levied alike upon the clergy and the laity, and brought upon him the enmity of an arrogant Church, which claimed exemption from the burdens it willingly saw inflicted upon the common herd.

Yet this impost could not be called a "Benevolence" in the sense attached to that obnoxious word in the previous reign. The tax so designated was an absolute gift, whereas Richard pledged all that he possessed, even to his plate and jewels, for repayment of what he sincerely regarded as a temporary loan. Amongst other things, mention is made of "a salte of golde with a cover stonding upon a morene garnyshed with perles and precious stones," pledged by the King to Richard Gardyner, Alderman of London, for £66 13*s.* 4*d.* †

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 275.

† App. to "First Report of the Hist. MSS. Commission," p. 50.

No contemporary would be better informed; few, if any, more hostile to this act of the King, than Alderman Fabyan. Yet, whilst denouncing the impost, he shows how entirely unfounded were the charges brought against Richard, of having borrowed without an intention of repaying, "for surety whereof he delivered to them good and sufficient pledges." * So far, then, the King was entitled to the credit of not intentionally contravening the pledges he had given to Parliament. But though the strictures of the Tudor historians are unjust, they fairly reflected public opinion, in describing these exactions not as benevolences, but as "malevolences."

Circulars were issued, some of them addressed beforehand, to individuals whose means the Council were able to assess, or whom it was felt desirable to secure unawares, before they had the opportunity of escaping the exaction by flight. Others were left blank, for the King's agents to act upon information obtained in the different counties for which they were commissioned. Their instructions were to appeal to the loyalty of "every true Englishman," and to mollify their victims with the assurance that the King "writeth to you before other" because of "the great love, confidence, and substance that his Grace hath and knoweth in you." These circulars, issued on the 21st of February, were in the following words:

"Trusty and well-beloved; we greet you well. And for such great and excessive costs and charges as we hastily must bear and sustain, as well for the keeping of the sea as otherwise for the defence of this our realm, we desire and in our heartiest wise pray you to send unto us *by way of loan* by our

* Fabyan, p. 672.

trusty servant .* And we promise you by these our letters, signed with our own * truly to recontent you * thereof at Martilmas next coming, and * residue at the feast of St. John Baptist then next following without further delay; assuring you that, accomplishing this our instant desire and hearty prayer, ye shall find us your good and gracious sovereign lord in any your reasonable desires hereafter." †

As determining the true nature of this impost the fact should not be overlooked, as it generally has been, that this circular was addressed "to those from whom *the commons requested loans* in the King's name." And further, that in the instructions to the commissions charged to deliver the circulars, the following words occur: "his grace, *and all his lords,* thinking that every true Englishman will help him," etc.

These words render it clear, beyond the possibility of question, that *the tax was a loan*—a forced loan indeed, but not a benevolence in the accepted sense of the phrase; and that it was solicited, not as the arbitrary act of the King alone, but with the consent and on the responsibility of the Privy Council *and of the commons,* by which however we must understand, not the Parliament legally assembled, but probably certain leading members of the Commons' House whom the King was able to consult.

The citizens of London are said to have been especially taxed,‡ probably because the King found that he could most easily furnish security to them. Yet only twenty letters were

* Words omitted in the MS.

† Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 275 h, quoted by Mr. Gairdner.

‡ Fabyan, p. 518.

issued to London and the County of Middlesex.* The "least sum" demanded from an individual in the metropolis was £40, "for surety whereof he delivered to them good and sufficient pledges." By the end of March no less than £20,000 had been raised. Altogether the tax cannot be said to have been oppressive, however capricious it may have seemed in its incidence. Even for the rich counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, it appears that only eleven letters were issued, unaddressed, for sums ranging from £50 to £100.† If we contrast these exactions with those arbitrarily levied by Edward IV., they shrink into comparative insignificance.‡

From the great wealth of the religious fraternities the impost fell with great heaviness upon the Church, and was bitterly resented by the clergy. To this cause alone can be ascribed the envenomed tone of the continuator of the Croyland Chronicle, whose impartial history has hitherto been our most valuable guide: "Oh God!" he exclaims, "why should we any longer dwell on this subject, multiplying our recital of things . . . so pernicious in their example that we ought not so much as suggest them to the minds of the perfidious." § This breach with the clergy was never healed. A few weeks later, in March, 1485, Richard issued a warrant for the arrest of Sir Lewis Deykess, priest, for certain "great murders, robberies, and other detestible offences." Such an invasion of one of their most stoutly claimed privileges

* Gairdner, p. 250. † *Ibid.*

‡ In the third year of King Edward (1463) we are told there was "a fervent frost, and now also there was holde a parliamente at Westmynster in the whiche was graunted to the Kynge ane ayde, whiche was as moche money as the xv. parte of mennys goodes and ane halff so myche more, where of the peple grocchede sore."—*Warkworth Chronicle*, p. 3.

§ "Croyland Chronicle," p. 498.

offended those of the clergy who might have condoned the attack upon the property of the Church.*

The position of the Church in relation to society was altogether anomalous and transitional. Hitherto the clergy, as their name of clerks (*i.e.*, scholars and instructors) implies, had been co-extensive with the educated classes. This was no longer the case, and the Church regarded with the utmost jealousy the growing cultivation of letters. That virtue and humanity are co-extensive with superior acquirements, is a popular fiction. In an age of cruelty and ignorance the cultivation of the intellect had perhaps not even a tendency to refine and humanise the character. Certainly no such tendency was apparent in lay or cleric. On the contrary, its first effect seems to have been the development of a ruthless disposition, a sense of superiority to the common herd of men, which prepared the way for outrage and almost justified the scorn of learning. The clergy, with a few honourable exceptions, were cruel, licentious, and worldly; whilst the most accomplished scholar of his day, Tiptoft Lord Worcester, deservedly acquired the sobriquet of "The Butcher of England."

From the clerical standpoint Richard had certainly done much to forfeit the esteem of their caste. Himself a scholar, he had laboured to advance learning both by legislation and by private patronage, and spared no pains to encourage the invention which was destined to transmit his own name to the hatred of posterity. He had denounced the immorality of the clergy, and moved the bishops to attempt to remedy the scandal. He had taxed the property of the Church for the

* See Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 572.

necessities of the State. And, as the Church in every direction showed itself unprepared to meet the requirements of the age, the King had rendered notorious clerical offenders amenable to the civil law. It was well known that the Pope was opposed to the Lancastrians, Archbishop Bourchier and the Yorkists having, from motives of State policy, surrendered the principle of upholding the Councils against the supremacy of the Holy See. Moreover, Innocent VIII. had emphatically recognised Richard's efforts to promote religion. In this he was supported by Cardinal Bourchier. No appeal, therefore, could be made to Rome against the reforming King; and the clergy, who had so recently lauded him to the skies, stood aloof in sullen aversion, which they were prepared to exchange for an attitude of active hostility.

The time was favourable for the Earl of Richmond to address himself to those of his supporters in England who had transferred their allegiance to the House of York. Many of them had been influenced by the belief, which recent events had not tended to confirm, that the liberties of the country, and the preservation of peace, were safe in the firm grasp of Richard III. The men who had flocked to the Earl's support at Paris were not only Lancastrians, but discontented Yorkists, who regarded Richard as a regicide, a usurper, and a tyrant. Their attachment to the House of York, as represented by the children of Edward IV., remained unshaken. The only ground of their adhesion to Henry was his contract to marry the Princess Elizabeth when he had seized the crown. If then Richard forestalled him in this design, their continued support could not be depended on. This fact was brought home to Henry by the actual defection of the Marquis of

Dorset, who, as we have seen, acting upon his mother's advice, secretly left Paris and attempted to reach England by way of Flanders. This circumstance had probably alarmed the Earl for the stability of his other friends.

No Lancastrian of commanding influence had yet espoused Henry's cause. But about this time the Earl of Oxford, with the connivance of Sir James Blount, effected his escape from Hammes Castle, near Calais. He was an old and formidable foe of Edward IV.; a brave and active warrior, in the confidence of Queen Margaret. In 1462, his father and brother were executed for corresponding with the exiled Queen after the battle of Towton; whilst he himself had excited the jealousy of Edward IV., and increased his own influence by his marriage with the sister of the great Earl of Warwick. After the battle of Shrewsbury, he had escaped into France, whence he made a dash at the Cornish coast and captured the fortress of Mount St. Michael. Here he baffled Edward's repeated attempts to take the impregnable fortress; but eventually surrendered to Richard Fortescue, an old Lancastrian comrade and friend, on the King's word that the lives of himself and his followers should be spared.* The Earl was confined in Hammes Castle, whilst his Countess was reduced to indigence, and compelled to support herself by the use of her needle,† until Richard III. magnanimously conferred upon her an annuity of £100.

The Earl of Oxford joined Henry, Earl of Richmond, in Paris. When the latter saw him, we are told, "he was ravished with joy incredible that a man of so great nobility, and knowledge of the wars, and of most perfect and sound

* Lingard, vol. iv., p. 194.
Stow, p. 426. Fenn's "Letters," vol. ii., pp. 133, 156.

fidelity . . . in so fit a time came to help him."* Richard realised the full gravity of an incident which first made his rival formidable. He ordered a portion of the garrison of Calais to seize the Castle of Hammes and its faithless Governor. But "those who were within the castle when they saw the adversary approach armed themselves quickly for the defence, and anon sent messengers to the Earl to demand aid."† Oxford encamped not far from the castle, and obtained terms for the besieged, who were allowed to depart with bag and baggage. He thus enhanced the great reputation which he already enjoyed as a general. This, with his rank and influence, constituted him the most valuable acquisition which the Earl of Richmond had yet received. His adhesion was the immediate cause of the following proclamation which was sent to England:

"Right trusty, worshipful, and honourable good friends, I greet you well.

"Being given to understand your good devoir and entreaty to advance me to the furtherance of my rightful claim, due, and lineal inheritance of that crown, and for the just depriving of that homicide and unnatural tyrant which now unjustly bears dominion over you, I give you to understand that no Christian heart can be more full of joy and gladness than the heart of me, your poor exiled friend; who will, upon the instant of your sure advertising what power you will make ready and what captains and leaders you get to conduct, be prepared to pass over the sea with such force as my friends here are preparing for me. And if I have such good speed and success as I wish, according

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 208. † *Ibid.*, p. 212.

to your desire, I shall ever be most forward to remember and wholly to requite this your great and most loving kindness in my just quarrel.

"Given under our signet, H. R." *

The Earl now recognised that further procrastination would prove fatal to his designs. Charles VIII. was ready to advance the required money, and equally so to rid him of a probable traitor, by accepting the Marquis of Dorset and Sir John Bourchier as hostages for its repayment. Henry fitted out a small fleet at Harfleur, and proceeded to Rouen.† Here he awaited tidings of the reception of his manifesto in England, with anxiety intensified by information he had received of Richard's reconciliation with the Queen. He appears even to have heard that Richard had married the Princess Elizabeth, and given her sister Cecily to "an obscure man of no reputation."‡ If this were so, the Earl could not fulfil his promise to his Yorkist supporters. To be sure Richard was married whilst the Earl was free; and so far the chances of the matrimonial alliance appeared to favour the latter, and Henry discarded the rumour that the King, having become a widower, had actually married the Princess. Even those who believed Richard capable of any crime in furtherance of his ambition, might well doubt his daring to compass the death of the daughter of the great Earl of Warwick. For not only did he hold his rich manors in Yorkshire in right of Queen Anne, but the sturdy loyalty of the men of the north had its source and chief inspiration in their attachment to the house of Warwick. Yet the spite of his enemies was such, that reports, incredible

* Halliwell. "Letters of the Kings of England," vol. i., p. 161.
† Polydore Vergil, p. 215. ‡ *Ibid.*

and contradictory, were circulated in anticipation of the Queen's death, with the view of bringing suspicion to bear upon the King. It was said that he had caused a rumour to be circulated, "but he would not have the author known," that the Queen was dead, the object imputed to him being so to alarm the Queen that she, "taking some conceit of this strange fame, should fall into some sudden sickness." She was represented as passionately demanding from the King why she should die? Richard of course was the consummate hypocrite. He "answered her with fair words, and with smiling and flattering leasings comforted her, bidding her to be of good cheer, for to his knowledge she should have none other cause." *

Defamation is commonly successful. It was so in the case of Richard III. "Did ffame never lye?" asks Cornewaleys. "Yet, for true or honest, I am sure she hath lyed; ffor what are more generally received for [testimony?] than flyinge reportes; wheras the simplest will not give credit to fame or take your words without a Suretye whose words they may assuredly know to be true." † The Queen was known to be in delicate health. She had never recovered from the shock occasioned by the sudden death of her son, and was now the victim of consumption, languishing "in weaknesse and extremity of sorrow, until she seemed rather to overtake death than death her." But it was with a shock of surprise, not wholly free from suspicion, that the public heard of her death on the 16th of March. There were not wanting those who openly attributed it to poison, and the tears which the King

* Grafton, p. 837. † MS. in the Duke of Devonshire's Collection, p. 8.

shed at her funeral to hypocrisy. These were the slanders of party hatred, which the Earl of Richmond's manifesto had raised to a white heat. They are not repeated even by the Tudar chroniclers, with the exception of Grafton, who says, "either by inward thought and pensiveness of heart, or by the infection of poison—which is affirmed to be most likely—the Queen departed out of this transitory life." Evidence of the King's unfeigned grief at his bereavement does not rest upon the statements of partial biographers. One of the first instruments which bears his signature after the Queen's death, is the appointment of Lord Maltravers as his deputy at the festival of the patron saint of England, "which the King could not at this time in his own person conveniently keep." This is but one of several incidents which tend to show that the grief, which found an outward expression in the gorgeous obsequies at which "the King shed many tears," was not simulated. It is not a little suggestive of the prejudice which has blinded the judgment of almost every historian, from the antiquary Rous to Mr. Gairdner, that the manly grief of Richard should be described as hypocritical, whilst they record of Henry VII., when he deposited the remains of the Princess Elizabeth in the first grave in the new chapel at Westminster Abbey, that "the sumptuousness of her obsequies was *justly* regarded as a proof of his affection." * Such judgments have no regard to the moral qualities of the act that is made the subject of praise or censure, but exclusively to the individuality of the actor. There is reason in Buck's observation: "If his (Richard's) disposition be affable or courteous, then he insinu-

* Sandford, p. 470.

ates and dives into people's hearts; his bounty is a subtle trick to purchase friendship; if he does not resent injuries his patience is hypocrisy; the very motions of his fingers and of his lips are made suggestive of depravity.*

The Queen was but twenty-eight years old. She had inspired the dreams of Richard's boyhood—had been the solace of his hours of care and danger. In public as in private we find her ever at his side, honoured and loved by the King, and the object of popular interest and affection. There is not the shadow of a doubt that she died a natural death, not the less deeply lamented by the King, even if, for political reasons, he had contemplated a marriage with the Princess Elizabeth when left a widower, as, in the previous year, the Queen's physicians had assured him that he soon must be. Tidings of the Queen's death reached the Earl of Richmond at Rouen a few days later, filling him and his followers with dismay. Incestuous marriages were not uncommon; they had been connived at by Rome, and it does not appear to have occurred to Henry that they might not be tolerated in England. To him it was a crucial question, involving the support or the defection of the Yorkists who had espoused his cause.

The question whether Richard ever contemplated actual marriage with his niece is open to the gravest doubt. The chroniclers affirmed that "when he resolved in his wavering mind how great a fountain of mischief toward him should spring if the Earl of Richmond should be advanced to the marriage of his niece, which thing he heard say by the

* Buck, in Kennett, p. 548.

rumour of the people that no small number of wise and witty persons enterprised to compass and bring to conclusions," * he resolved in defiance of all obstacles to marry her himself. Horace Walpole suggests that he probably intended only to amuse the Princess and prevent her marrying Henry, and after the death of his son this appears the only rational explanation of Richard's conduct. By a marriage with his niece he would virtually have proclaimed himself a usurper and have acknowledged the criminality of the act by which he had bastardised the children of Edward IV.

Richard had already alienated the clergy by the exaction of his forced loan. Had they been instrumental in bringing about the betrothment between the Earl of Richmond and the Princess Elizabeth, he would not have shrunk from a contest with them; but that he should court it by the scandal of marrying his niece surpasses belief. "A measure so inconsistent with his safety, so contradictory to the whole tenor of his policy, seems incredible; and can it for a moment be believed that he endeavoured to effect it by the murder of a wife who was fast hastening to the tomb with disease, and by a marriage which even the authority of the Pope could not, it is said, reconcile to the feelings and manners of his subjects?" † The supposition is monstrously absurd, and the calumny one of the darkest, as it is the stupidest, that disgraces the pages of the Lancastrian chroniclers.

The question of the disposition of the Princess Elizabeth is interesting rather than important, and is involved in considerable obscurity. The assent of her mother, if it could be shown

* Grafton, p. 835.

† "Elizabeth of York," by Sir Harry Nicolas, p. 382.

to have been a fact, is not difficult to understand. It promised to secure to her a brilliant position, and to all her daughters those marriage settlements which the King had guaranteed to them on their quitting sanctuary. But the consent—much more the eagerness—of the Princess for this incestuous marriage appears so unnatural as to be barely credible. After the accession of Henry VII. she was represented to have been horrified by the proposal, on the grounds of consanguinity, of personal aversion to the murderer of her brothers, and of suspicion that it indicated danger to the life of Queen Anne. But, however much we may desire to believe that Elizabeth was swayed by considerations of high morality, the balance of evidence does not support this view.

Sir George Buck quotes a letter addressed by the Princess to the Duke of Norfolk, from which it appears that she had consulted the Queen's physicians as to the probable length of her life, and had been assured that she would not survive the month of February. It was now March, and Sir G. Buck writes:

"The Lady Elizabeth, being more impatient and jealous of the success that every one knew or conceived, writes a letter to the Duke of Norfolk intimating, first, that he was the man in whom she affied, in respect of that love her father ever bore him, etc. Then she congratulates his many courtesies, in continuance of which she desires him to be a mediator for her to the King in behalf of the marriage propounded between them; who, as she wrote, was her only joy and maker in the world, and that she was his in heart and thought; withal insinuating that the better part of February was past, and that she feared the Queen would never die.

All these be her own words, written with her own hand, and this is the sum of her letter, which remains in the autograph or original draft, under her own hand, in the magnificent cabinet of Thomas, Earl of Arundel and Surrey." *

It is certainly very remarkable that no trace of this document has ever been discovered, no reference to it made in any other manuscripts, no other person than Sir George Buck known to have ever heard of it. It is therefore not surprising that his statement has been questioned on the ground of his credulity. But his veracity is not open to doubt, and it should be remembered that other statements of his which at one time appeared incredible, "have been corroborated by subsequent discoveries." † We cannot get rid of testimony such as this by assuming, as Mr. Gairdner does, that the letter may itself have been a forgery, palmed off upon Buck, or "*by him upon his readers.*" It is evident that he believed that he was quoting from a genuine document, one, moreover, of too much importance to warrant the supposition that its noble owner would have failed to correct him had he been deluded by a forgery. A more probable conjecture—also Mr. Gairdner's—is, that the letter may have been written by Elizabeth Woodville. The reference to the love that *her father* had ever borne the Duke of Norfolk appears to militate against this view, unless we further suppose that the mother, in whom all ideas of morality were too clearly perverted, palmed the letter upon the Duke as that of her daughter. But we are here in the region of pure conjecture, for which the deliberate statements of the learned antiquary who had apparently seen the letter in question, afford no justification.

* Sir George Buck, p. 568.

† Horace Walpole.

If another guess may be hazarded, it appears to me that although the document may have been authentic, it was misconstrued by Sir G. Buck. He gives the substance of the letter, not a transcript. No person is actually *named* as the object of her passionate attachment. May not the explanation be that the almost illegible scrawl of the Princess baffled Sir George, who, in perfect good faith, but none the less quite erroneously, introduced the reference to the King, consistently with the belief prevailing in his time? In any case, as Mr. Sharon Turner remarks, he was a cold wooer who needed the interposition of a third party to rouse him.

The charge of murder was again hurled against Richard; and though unsupported by a tittle of evidence, opposed to the testimony of the Queen's physicians, and based upon nothing more substantial than the fact that the young Princess had been placed about the person of her aunt, clad in a dress of similar form and texture to that worn by the Queen, the cruel accusation seems to have been credited by many. Certain it is that rumours of foul play were persistently circulated, "which are prestigious and blacke Comments falsely plac't to the margent of history, and may more nearely touch the credit of the Authors than his." * When subjected to the historical test, all these transcendently wicked reports resolve themselves into this—that on the day of the Queen's death there occurred a total eclipse of the sun! In a superstitious age, when such natural phenomena were regarded as omens, the fact lent credibility to the inventions of the King's enemies. The eclipse was appealed to as affording irrefragable proof of the violent death of the

* Buck.

Queen, and of the King's desire of elevating his niece to share his throne.* Such is the worth of those contemporary records upon which the traditional estimate of Richard III. is based.

Whether it was ever contemplated by Richard or not, the rumour of his projected marriage was believed. And now that the Queen's death had removed every obstacle, public opinion expressed itself with a fierce decision. But the King had already adopted measures to disarm the unfounded suspicion. Within a month of the Queen's death he summoned the Mayor and Aldermen, with such of the lords spiritual and temporal, as were in London, to meet him in the great hall of the Hospital of St. John.† He received them with due solemnity and courtesy, declaring that the report of his contemplated marriage was a malicious fabrication of his and their enemies, and that by him such an idea had never been entertained. Then, addressing the Mayor, he ordered him to arrest all persons who should give utterance to such injurious falsehoods, and to detain them until they revealed the names of those from whom they had heard them, and thus to trace the rumours to their source. This disavowal was afterwards repeated in the presence of a meeting of the leading citizens, when the King declared that he had never contemplated "acting otherwise than is according to honour, truth, and the peace and rightfulness of this our land."

Richard must have been aware that obedience to the orders given to the Lord Mayor was impracticable, since the

* See Miss Halsted, vol. ii., p. 400.
† "Croyland Chronicle," p. 500.

whole population was compromised. Nevertheless, he sent similar instructions to York, where, for the first time, murmurs of disaffection had been heard. The language in which these instructions were couched was by no means exaggerated.

"Divers seditious and evil-disposed persons both in our city of London and elsewhere within this our realm enforce themselves daily and sow seeds of noise and disclaundre (slander) against our person, and against many of the lords and estates of the land, to abuse the multitude of our subjects and avert their mind from us, if they could by any means attain to that their inclination, intent, and purpose, some by setting up of bills, some by messages and sending forth of false and abominable language and lies, some by bold and presumptuous open speech . . . wherewith innocent people that would live in rest and peace have been oft times put in danger of their lives. . . . For remedy whereof we lately called before us the mayor and aldermen of the city of London, to whom we largely shewed our true intent and mind . . . and gave straitly in charge as well to the said mayor as to all other officers that from henceforth as oft as they find any person speaking of us or any other lord or estate of this land otherwise than is according to honour, truth, and the peace and restfulness of this realm, they take and arrest the same persons unto the time he have brought forth him or them to whom he understood that that is spoken, and so proceeding from one to other unto the time the first actor and maker of the said seditious speech and language be taken and punished according to his desert . . . all which directions . . . we notify unto you by these our letters." *

* Davies' "York Records," pp. 209–10.

Richard had long since recognised the fact that he would never more be reinstated in the affections of his subjects, which he had done much to earn, by devoting the energies of a powerful and intrepid mind to the service of the State. Henceforth, if he would be King he must be, what his enemies had termed him, tyrant also. There are men in every age who will not, or cannot, see on which side of a political cause right and justice are to be found; but the fomentors of sedition with whom Richard had to deal had no regard for right and justice, no sense of honour, and no higher aim than their own aggrandisement. Yet, if Richard was a tyrant, the various enactments which in the spring of 1485 were placed upon the Statute Book, without running the gauntlet of opposition in the House of Commons, were of a nature to reflect honour upon their author, and have won the encomiums of his traducers. The object of his legislation was "the ease and solace of the common people," the curbing of the power of an insolent and debauched nobility.

If Richard had been the hardened, reckless, and revengeful demon portrayed by the Tudor chroniclers and by Shakspeare, the Princesses would assuredly have shared the fate supposed to have overtaken their brothers. His own palace had been the natural home of the Princess Elizabeth during the lifetime of her aunt, who received her "as a sister." But if the King could no longer make her his personal charge, it was needful to take precautions against the success of his rival. She was accordingly consigned to Sheriff Hutton Castle, where her cousin Edward, the young Earl of Warwick, still the recognised heir to the throne, was a nominal prisoner, and where both enjoyed

all the indulgence consistent with their safety.* We hear of her no more during Richard's lifetime. Having secured her person, he felt that he could despise the Earl, whose avowed sympathisers in England were men of little power and of less note.

* At Sheriff Hutton the Earl of Warwick "had liberty, large diet, all pleasure and safety."—BUCK. It was the home of his ancestors, the residence at this time of his relatives, a stately mansion in which Richard occasionally resided himself, and the story of Rous, of the Earl's "strict confinement," is monstrous.

CHAPTER VI.

The Earl of Richmond had little reason to apprehend danger to his cause from the death of Queen Anne. That event, however, plunged him in the deepest melancholy, since it seemed to remove the only obstacle to a marriage between the King and the Princess Elizabeth. If this were effected, all his preparations to invade the kingdom were vain, his enterprise was hopeless. His first thought was to hasten for England, "presuming his landing would forbid the banns." Wiser counsels prevailed. All was not lost with the Princess; an alliance with the family of a powerful noble of the Yorkist party might equally serve his purpose. Wherefore, says Buck, "quickly varying his disposition to his fortune, he would now fix himself upon some choice in Britain amongst his noble friends, and treats about a daughter of Sir William Herbert . . . who had married, not long before, the eldest daughter to the Earl of Northumberland." * It is more than probable that Henry had passed his childhood with the children of Sir William Herbert at Pembroke Castle. His son, Sir Walter Herbert, was a man of much authority in Wales. He had a marriageable sister, and the Lancastrians hoped, by the ties of affinity, to attach

* Buck, p. 541.

the popular Welsh chieftain to their cause, and "to procure the same, messengers were sent to Henry, Earl of Northumberland, who had in marriage Walter's other sister, that he would deal in that cause." *

The arrival at Rouen, at this juncture, of John Morgan, who informed the Earl that Sir John Savage, Rice ap Thomas, and Reginald Bray, all of whom were wholly devoted to his cause, "were ready with great forces to assist him," served to remove the depression of spirits into which Henry had fallen.†

Richard was aware of the preparations of his rival for a second invasion; but his place of asylum appears to have been involved in mystery. He had hastily quitted Paris in the previous autumn, Charles VIII. being probably himself ignorant of his destination. About the end of May, "shortly before the Feast of Pentecost," Richard quitted London. Leaving Lovell near Southampton "to refit his fleet with all possible speed that he might keep a strict watch upon all the harbours in those parts," ‡ he hastened to Nottingham, whence he could move with equal facility and rapidity upon any point at which a landing might be attempted. Sir George Neville was appointed to a squadron designed for the protection of the East Coast. The Earl of Arundel, Warden of the Cinque Ports, received reinforcements, whilst for the protection of the coasts of Lancashire and Wales the King relied upon the Stanleys, the Herberts, and Welsh chieftains sworn to his service.

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 215.
† "Chronicles of the Kings of England," by Sir R. Baker, p. 232.
‡ "Croyland Chronicle," p. 500.

Before Richard left London, he made that change in the succession which circumstances imperatively demanded. The nomination of the young Earl of Warwick as his heir, was understood to have been provisional; and, although the selection was popular at the time, no surprise was felt when the King set him aside in favour of John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, and son of the Duke of Suffolk. Not only was there inconsistency in the adoption as heir to the Crown of the son of his brother Clarence, upon whose attainder Richard based his own claims, but the young Earl was acknowledged to be mentally incapacitated for that high position. The offspring of an unnatural union between first cousins, the youth was of weak intellect, and, had Richard adhered to his original choice, it would have received the sanction neither of Parliament nor of the nation. The Tudor chroniclers generally coincide with Hall in this description of the Earl of Warwick. The charges of cruelty which they allege against Richard are wholly unauthentic, and quite clearly unveracious. Baker tells us that he had been kept in the Tower by the Marquis of Dorset from his very infancy, "out of all company of men and sight of beasts, so as he scarcely knew a hen from a goose or one beast from another." * He was nine years of age on Richard's accession, and, as we have seen, he joined the King at Warwick in the train of the Queen, his maternal aunt. Even Rous admits that he enjoyed the consideration due to the son of the Duke of Clarence, when residing at the Court of Richard, and there can be no doubt that his uncle and aunt, commiserating his bodily and mental weakness, made

* "Chronicle," p. 225.

him the object of their affectionate and assiduous care. His age could not exceed eleven, and it is matter of certainty that he was one of "the children" referred to in the King's Ordinance for the Regulation of his Household at Middleham, where he would enjoy equal privileges with Prince Edward. So purely mythical are the gross calumnies of the Tudor chroniclers!

On the other hand, the Earl of Lincoln, who bore the same relationship to Richard III., was older, more highly endowed, and by nature and education qualified for the high position assigned him. He was also the fittest instrument for securing the peace with Scotland, his sister Anne de la Pole being affianced to the Duke of Rothsay, eldest son of James III. Another motive which may probably have influenced Richard in making this change in the succession, was the fact that, whilst Edward Earl of Warwick might be put forward by a faction as a possible rival, the son of his sister was a safer heir. For Richard, who had himself been attainted, would certainly not consider the young Earl's pretensions to the throne as forfeited by the attainder passed upon Clarence. His own father, moreover, was the son of the attainted Earl of Cambridge; yet the Duke of York had held his father's attainder no bar to his succession.*

Richard does not appear to have reached Nottingham until the 22nd of June. Whitsuntide fell in the last week of May, and was spent by the King at Kenilworth. Here we find him harassed by creditors, the necessity of settling whose claims may have delayed his departure. The brewers

* Walpole's "Historic Doubts," p. 61.

seem to have driven the best trade with the royal household; for, whilst their claims amount to £134 10*s.*, those of the bakers stand at the modest sum of £14 3*s.* To this, however, must be added seventeen bills for wheat, amounting to £67 10*s.*; the bulk of this would probably be ground for the royal household.* On his arrival at Nottingham—where he kept his Court on the customary scale of magnificence and liberality—the King lost no time in ordering a fresh levy of troops in every county. Remembering the beggarly appearance of the rough north-country lads, "evil apparelled and worse harnessed," who had excited the ridicule of the citizens of London just a year ago, he directed his commissioners to require "all knights, esquires, and gentlemen" to lay aside all private quarrels and be ready, with their respective quota of men, to obey the King's summons at an hour's notice, "arrayed every man after his degree and power, to attend upon his person to do him service in defence as well of the church as of the nobles . . . . against his said enemies and rebels." †

The proclamation issued six months earlier was renewed. In its sweeping charges of libertinism, and the suggestion of the moral indignation with which the evil lives of the Earl of Richmond and his adherents filled the pure mind of the King, it rivalled that against Buckingham. They were described as "open murderers, adulterers, extortioners, rebels to God, honour, and nature;" as "double traitors"—to their own country and to Brittany; who, "under Henry, their bastard leader, begotten in double adultery, intend to enter his king-

* Gairdner's "Richard III."

† Fenn, "Original Letters," vol. ii., p. 327.

dom and, by conquest, despoil his subjects of life, liberty, and goods."* He, therefore, appeals to every man to lift up his hands against them, since this "Henry Tydder, son of Edmund Tydder, son of Owen Tydder," and his wicked followers, "will commit the most horrid murders, slaughters, and robberies that were ever heard of in a Christian country." It is *their* enemies rather than his, he skilfully insinuates, that they are summoned to oppose, whilst he "will courageously expose his most royal person to every labour and hazard to subdue their enemies and comfort his faithful subjects, and calls forth every man to defend his King in battle."

A month after his arrival in Nottingham, Richard ordered the Great Seal to be sent to him by the hands of Thomas Barrowe, the Master of the Rolls. At the time of Buckingham's rebellion the issue of commissions had been deferred by the King's unreadiness in this respect. Irregularities then connived at, would be dangerous in the present temper of the public mind, and Rymer records, with minute detail, the hour and place of the delivery and receipt of this essential instrument of a royal commission. "At 8 o'clock, in the Old Temple, in a certain low oratory near the chapel," it was delivered to Barrowe on the 29th of July; and on the 11th of August, in the presence of the Archbishop of York, "in the oratory under the chapel, in Nottingham Castle," it was handed to the King, who re-delivered it to Barrowe, appointing him then and there its provisional custodian.

Everything pointed to an approaching crisis. The Earl of Richmond had reappeared in Paris with many adherents and

* "Paston Letters," vol. iii., p. 316.

abundance of money. He had received a welcome at the Court which proved the hollowness of Charles VIII.'s professions of amity, by which Richard had never been deceived. Numerous disappearances of men of rank and station at home in part explained the numbers reported to have followed Henry to Paris, as well as the confidence and activity of the confederates. The escape of the Earl of Oxford from Hammes, in itself a grave disaster, acquired its greatest importance from the evidence it was supposed to afford that some person of greater influence than Sir James Blount was tampering with the troops in France, whose reliableness might at any moment be of vital importance.

Before he left London, Richard had received information that "rebels and traitors associate with our ancient enemies of France" contemplated an immediate invasion of the realm. He was also warned to keep an especial watch upon Milford in the neighbourhood of Southampton; an ancient prophecy, it was said, indicated this as the place at which an invasion would take place.* The probability that the Earl of Richmond would select Milford Haven for his attempt was so great, that it is barely possible that Richard could have understood either prophecy or rumour to have pointed to the little village of Milford on the Hampshire coast, although this also possessed a harbour.† At Milford Haven, Henry Tudor would be amongst his own people. He was even now negotiating a marriage with the sister of Sir Walter Herbert, who possessed great influence in the Principality; and the attainted Earl of Pembroke, his maternal uncle and a lineal descendant of John

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 500. † *Ibid.*

of Gaunt, still lived in the affections of his Welsh feudatories.* The fatal misconception as to the harbour at which the Earl designed to land seems, however, to have been formed by the King. Nothing else can account for the commission given to Viscount Lovell, and the profitless expenditure upon his fleet at Southampton.

Meanwhile the Earl of Richmond had assembled an army of 7,000 men at Rouen. Of these, 5,000 had been supplied by Charles VIII., whilst the perfidious Duke of Brittany, ever ready to extort a bribe from one party by offering assistance or friendship to the other, had sent a contingent of 2,000 men, apparently without solicitation. But Henry's forces were rather numerous than formidable. As a consequence of the long-continued wars between France and England, numerous freebooters, under officers chosen from amongst themselves, and composed of the refuse of all countries, infested various parts of France and Brittany.† Of these hireling combatants, who, when their services were not bought by the reigning sovereigns, supported themselves by brigandage, France was only too glad to be rid, and Henry's army was chiefly composed.

Whilst Richard was thus deserted by his allies abroad,

* Mr. Hutton says that Henry had spent much time in Wales, "travelling secretly among the powerful families," to solicit their aid, and "in paying his addresses to Miss Herbert."—HUTTON, p. 134. This can only have been since the death of Queen Anne.

Like the gypsies, who now for the first time appeared in England, without home, or property, or country, living by plunder, and plundering for sport—men who openly boasted—

"La guerre est ma patrie,
Mon harnois ma maison
Et en toute saison
Combattre c'est ma vie."

treachery at home threatened yet greater evil. He knew not who about him, knowing his plans and enjoying his confidence, might not be in collusion with his open foes. The Earl of Richmond relied upon the great influence of his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke. But there were other powerful Welshmen, as Sir Walter Herbert, John Morgan, and, before all, Rice ap Thomas, "the Mars of Wales," as he was called, who, from motives of self-interest, had long been plotting in his favour. This latter chieftain had been specially recommended to the confidence of the Earl by his mother, now the Countess Stanley, and it was the promise of his support which induced Henry to select Milford Haven for his landing. The failure of Buckingham has been—perhaps with some exaggeration—attributed to a feud between him and Rice ap Thomas, which prevented the latter from espousing his cause. His biographer, and descendant, claims for the Welshman a conscientious scruple. Sympathy and self-interest led him to favour the Earl of Richmond, but his oath of allegiance bound him to the King.

With that alert and jealous vigilance which never failed him, Richard had sent commissioners to Carmarthen to receive the oath of allegiance from the leading inhabitants, and, amongst others, from Rice ap Thomas. In his "Life," in which his compatriot lauds him in most extravagant terms, a letter to the King is printed, wherein, after announcing that he had taken the oath which he promises faithfully to observe, he writes:—"I deem it not unseasonable to add this voluntary protestation, that whoever, ill-affected to the State, shall dare to land in those parts of Wales where I have employments against your Majesty, must resolve with himself to make his

entrance and irruption over my belly. . . . My conscience binds me to love and serve my King and country; my vow can do no more. . . . Could I find myself culpable of one single thought repugnant to the allegiance I owe to your Majesty, I should think already I have lived over long." The King had entrusted him with the defence of Milford Haven, whence he had contrived to visit Henry at Rouen in the spring, whilst, by his connivance, the Earl is supposed to have visited Wales.

Rice ap Thomas, whom Buckingham had threatened to "come and cudgel him out of his castle at Carnarvon," had been won over to Richmond by the influence of Morgan of Kydwelly, whose brother Evan had shared the Earl of Richmond's exile. "There were four of this worthy family," writes the biographer of Rice, "the Bishop of St. David's, Morgan of Kidwelly, John Morgan, and this Evan, the top of them all, who were special actors and contrivors of this business for as much as concerned us in Wales." * The expression "Bishop of St. David's" would seem to have been used for the purpose of distinguishing one John Morgan (probably a cousin) from another. It cannot refer to Langton, who was then in possession of the See, but to John Morgan who was appointed to it in 1496.† This ecclesiastic, then, came to the relief of the tender conscience of Rice ap Thomas, offering to absolve him from his vow, or representing that if he still felt any scruple he might fulfil it to the letter by stretching

* The Harleian MSS. contain many records of Richard's generosity to the Morgans. Kydwelly stood high in his confidence, and had received "the Stewardship of all the lordships in the Duchy of Lancaster or otherwise belonging to the King in the county of Dorset."—*Harl. MSS.*, 433, fol. 49 b.

† Gairdner.

himself on the earth, and allowing Henry actually to step over his prostrate body.

Morgan Kydwelly had acquired the favour and patronage of the King, owing to the talent he displayed as a lawyer. Advanced to the office of Attorney-General, he had abused the opportunities offered by his confidential relations with Richard, to convey intelligence to the Earl of Richmond. He it was who warned him of Lovell's lying in wait at Southampton, informed him that Reginald Bray awaited his landing at Milford Haven, with large supplies of money raised by the Countess, and now fixed the date for his landing.

Rice ap Thomas cautiously employed his influence to win over other chieftains, and declared his treachery to trusted friends. About this time, Hugh Conway, who had been employed by the Countess of Richmond as a secret emissary to her son, returned with letters from the latter, one of which was addressed to Rice. The Welshman, who had not cared to avail himself of the dispensing power of the Church, was superstitious rather than religious. Before openly declaring himself he consulted his prophet, "Robert of the Dale," as to the issue of the Earl's enterprise. The seer foretold success, and his oath of allegiance to Richard no longer burdened his conscience.

The Earl of Richmond, with his English adherents, and an army of 2,000 continental mercenaries, sailed from Harfleur on the 1st of August. De Comines, who saw these troops, describes them as the worst he had ever beheld, and unworthy of the name of soldiers, the scum of the French nation, the sweepings of gaols, hospitals, and the streets. His description finds corroboration in the fact that it was

these men who introduced into England that dreadful scourge known as the Sweating Sickness, which afflicted this country like the plague. The only reference made to this epidemic by the chroniclers is the plea assigned by Lord Stanley for not joining the King at Nottingham. This, however, may have been suggested by the rumours of its outbreak in Henry's troops. If it existed in England before their arrival, it was certainly not in the form of an epidemic.*

About the 8th of August † the Earl of Richmond's fleet entered the harbour of Milford Haven, and his army disembarked without molestation. The only peril which Richard feared was treachery, and from the first moment of his rival's landing he was confronted with it. The whole population of Pembrokeshire were prepared for revolt. Rice ap Thomas might have anticipated the *mot* of the philosopher who said that he cared not who made the nation's laws so that he composed their songs. Rhymes reflecting upon Richard as a usurper, a tyrant, and a regicide were circulated, and then suppressed, with the result that they were more than ever sought after, and repeated by old and young.‡ But though the population were thus friendly to the point of enthusiasm, a barren welcome was all that they accorded to the invader. Their leaders were absent; the trained bands had been withdrawn from the

* See Appendix F.

† Polydore Vergil says "on the seventh or eighth day after" his embarcation at Harfleur.

‡ Notwithstanding the gloom which overspread the country, intensified by natural phenomena which were interpreted as presages, Englishmen at the close of the fifteenth century were still "songmen all, and very good ones." They all "loved a ballad but even too well, if it were doleful matter, merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing indeed, and sung lamentably," and thus anticipated the "Chap-book Chaplets," which the printing press furnished to the next generation.

town; it was a promiscuous company of civilians who shouted the praises of the Prince, for whom they showed no disposition to make a sacrifice of life or property. Henry advanced to Dell, and the day following to Haverfordwest, where he was joyfully welcomed.

After an exile of fourteen years Henry Tudor had returned to his native land, of which he claimed to be the rightful King. Immediately upon landing he reverently kissed the soil, signed himself with the Cross, and, kneeling down, repeated the Psalm, "Judge me, O Lord, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation. O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man." * He then appealed to his little company of 2,000 men to advance in the name of God and St. George. Surely never was enterprise undertaken with means so apparently incommensurate! But the Earl professed to come as a deliverer, and not as a foreign conqueror. His reliance was not upon his small muster of mercenaries, but upon the people over whom he claimed the rightful sovereignty, and from whom he had received numerous pledges of support. Hugh Conway had borne to him the impatient remonstrances of Rice ap Thomas at his delay in making the attempt for which everything was prepared. He had learned from Morgan Kydwelly that his mother's influence might be trusted, at least for securing the neutrality of Lord Stanley. Sir William Stanley was Chamberlain of North Wales, and was not only personally well-disposed, but certain to follow his brother's example, whilst both were in communication with the treacherous Morgan of Kydwelly.

Thus the whole Principality, with Lancashire and

* Fabyan, p. 672.

Cheshire, were either neutral or friendly, whilst the bribe of a royal marriage was dangled before the eyes of the Earl of Northumberland, who had been confirmed by Richard in the Lord Wardenship of the Marches and the Captaincy of Berwick.* In the Southern and Western counties the influence of Margaret Beaufort had survived the discomfiture of Buckingham. Throughout the country the Lancastrians were numerous, many of them burning to revenge defeat and persecution, whilst no inconsiderable number of the adherents of both Houses hailed the prospect of that final healing of old feuds and jealousies, which the marriage of Henry Tudor with the Princess Elizabeth promised to effect. The confidence thus inspired explains the extraordinary language in which the Earl of Richmond addressed letters to many of those whose allegiance had been promised. Neither now nor at any future time did he claim the throne by right of conquest. He claimed to be actual King, against whom "the Duke of Gloucester" and his followers were rebels—a fiction which was recorded in the Act of Attainder. Yet even the most friendly must have been astounded at the terms in which one, who at most was but a claimant to the throne, speaks of the crowned and anointed King as a rebel against himself. Mr. Gairdner quotes from Wynne's History of the Gwyder Family one of these letters. It is addressed to John ap Meredith:

"By the King.

"Right trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. And whereas it is so that, through the help of Almighty God, the assistance of our loving and true subjects, and the

* See "Grants, etc., of Edward V.," p. 20.

great confidence that we have to the nobles and commons of this our Principality of Wales, we be entered into the same, purposing, by the help above rehearsed, in all haste possible to descend into our realm of England, not only for the adeption of the crown, unto us of right appertaining, but also for the oppression of the odious tyrant, Richard late Duke of Gloucester, usurper of our said right; and moreover to reduce as well our said realm of England into its ancient estate, honour and property, and prosperity, as this our said Principality of Wales and the people of the same to their erst liberties, delivering them of such miserable servitude as they have pitiously long stood in; We desire and pray you, and upon your allegiance strictly charge and command you that, immediately upon the sight hereof, with all such power as ye may make, defensibly arrayed for the war, ye address you towards us . . . and that ye fail not hereof as ye will avoid our grievous displeasure, and answer it unto your peril."

The first tidings which reached Henry had been the reverse of encouraging. Sir John Savage and Rice ap Thomas, it was reported, were prepared to attack him. The crafty Rice had caused a report to be circulated that the royal forces, which had been watching the Haven all the winter in expectation of an attempted landing, were moving upon the town.* At Haverfordwest disquieting rumours again reached him. Rice ap Thomas, it was said, was not to be trusted. He was in the pay of Richard, who, so ran the report, was by this time aware of the Earl's landing. Other false alarms disconcerted him; but, relying on the Stanleys, he pushed five

* "Clean contrary to that he was certified of in Normandy."—POLYDORE VERGIL.

miles northward towards Cardigan.* The intelligence which awaited him there was still more alarming. The ardour with which Sir Walter Herbert had embraced his cause evaporated with his hopes of a royal alliance, and he was said to be collecting a force at Carmarthen to arrest the progress of the invaders. They were threatened with annihilation. The little army lost courage and thought only of flight. But retreat was now impossible. Their position seemed desperate. By desperate courage only could it be retrieved. "Every man made ready his armour, assayed his weapon, and began to advance the same," determined to sell their lives dearly. Henry sent out scouts to collect intelligence. Before they returned, to confirm rumours that were not wholly unfounded, his troops had been cheered by the arrival of a gentleman named Griffiths, and John Morgan.† Their retainers were not numerous, but their adhesion at least afforded evidence of disaffection towards the King. Arnold Butler also came to him with the welcome tidings that the people of Pembroke, under his uncle Jasper, were prepared to fight under his banner.

Rice ap Thomas had assembled his friends and retainers when Robert of the Dale had given him comfortable assurances of the success of the Earl's enterprise. Although his biographer is silent upon the incident, there is good reason to believe that he determined to profit by his supernatural knowledge. Henry must pay for the services which, in his ignorance of the decrees of Providence, he might well imagine essential to his success. The origin and meaning of the

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 216. † *Ibid.*, p. 217.

reports by which he had been alarmed were revealed when Rice openly bargained for the chief governorship of Wales as the price of his services. This granted, he prostrated himself before the Earl, requesting him to step over his body, as Bishop Morgan had suggested, to clear him of the violation of his oath. His conscience thus relieved, he marched with the enemy of his King to contribute to his overthrow.

Henry's chief reliance was upon the Stanleys. To reach them, whilst still concealing his line of march, he pressed on by unfrequented tracks to Shrewsbury, leaving Rice and his Welsh contingent to follow by another route. The beacons were fired, and although the Earl was disappointed that he was not joined by Sir William Stanley, the numbers who flocked to his standard showed how profoundly Welsh feeling was now stirred in his behalf. Griffith, Morgan, Arnold Butler, each brought with them a little army of retainers. An old prophecy, said to have been uttered by an angel in the time of King Cadwallader,* declared that the descendants of the Britons should recover the sovereignty of England. The credulity of the people was inflamed by their leaders, and at the call of patriotism a friendly neutrality developed into enthusiasm. This, alone, made Henry formidable.

The Earl had despatched couriers to his mother and others of his adherents, urging them to meet him at Shrewsbury, whence he proposed to march on London.† For this enterprise his hastily levied Welsh troops were insufficient. Their enthusiasm for a King in whose veins ran the blood of Cadwallader, was such as might perhaps produce deeds of

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 446.

† Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 217.

brilliant daring, it could hardly lead them to victory over Richard's veterans. They carried the standard of Cadwallader—"a red fiery dragon beaten upon white and green sarcenet;" but their leader did not share their faith in its invincibility. Soothsayers were consulted; but, however their predictions may have animated Rice ap Thomas, they had little effect upon Henry. One of these, David Lloyd, a prophet of repute, hesitated to pronounce offhand the issue of the coming struggle. Perhaps he shared Henry's apprehension that the French soldiers might quarrel with the Welshmen, but lacked courage to prophecy evil. With Delphian adroitness his wife interposed. "Can you doubt," she reproachfully asked, "what to reply? Tell him that the event will be successful and glorious. If your predictions be verified you will receive honours and rewards; if it fails he will never return to reproach you." *

Why Henry abandoned his plan of marching upon London is matter of conjecture. He was doubtless disappointed at the indecision of Lord Stanley who remained in Lancashire. His decision was probably formed at the instance of the Earl of Oxford, who knew the temper of the citizens too well to risk an attack, with an army composed almost exclusively of Welshmen and foreign mercenaries. Before he reached Shrewsbury, the Earl had the satisfaction of learning that Sir William Stanley and Sir John Savage had secretly declared in his favour.

One Thomas Mytton, of the same family as the Sheriff

* Owen and Blakeway's "Shrewsbury," p. 244. The truth of this story is said to be attested by a Welsh proverb founded upon it—"A wife's advice without asking it."

of the county, who had seized and executed the Duke of Buckingham, was Bailiff of Shrewsbury. Willing to admit Henry, he was bound by his oath of fealty to Richard, and ordered the gates of the city to be closed against the Earl. The story that is told of him, suggests that the similar one related of Rice ap Thomas may be apocryphal. Possibly, however, both may point to a common form of oath exacted by Richard III., and to the casuistry by which it was habitually evaded when found inconvenient. In this gentleman, Hutton quaintly remarks, "we behold the true nature, consequence, and bounds of an oath." The story, as related by this ingenious antiquary, runs thus:

"When the Earl of Richmond came to the town of Shrewsbury, the gates were shut against him, and the pulleys let down; so the Earl's messengers came to the Welsh gate, commanding them to open the gates to their right King. But Master Mitton made answer, being head Bayley, and a stout royal (royste) gentleman, saying that he knew no King, but only King Richard, whose lieutenants he and his fellows were; and before he should enter there he should go over his belly, meaning thereby that he would be slain to the ground, and so to run over him before he entered, and that he protested vehemently upon the oath he had taken. And so the said Earl returned with his company back again to a village called Forton, three miles and a half from Shrewsbury, where he lay that night; and in the following morning there came ambassadors to speak with the Bailiff, requesting to pass quietly, and that the Earl, their master, did not mean to hurt the town, nor none therein, but to go to try his right; and that he promised further that he

would save his oath, and him, and his fellows harmless. Upon this they entered, and the said Mitton lay along the ground with his belly upwards, and so the said Earl stepped over him, and saved his oath."

Arrived at Shrewsbury, Henry received encouraging promises of support from those to whom his messengers had been accredited. He was welcomed into the city with the ringing of bells and general acclamation, whilst Sir Richard Corbet, a stout Lancastrian friend, joined him with 800 adherents.* We next hear of him at Newport, in Shropshire, where he was joined by Sir Richard Talbot, Sheriff of the county, uncle and guardian of the young Earl of Shrewsbury, "with 500 and more armed men." †

So far from being correct was the rumour that Richard had heard of the landing of the Earl of Richmond forty-eight hours after it was effected, that no tidings of the event reached Nottingham until the Earl had marched across the Principality. It is impossible to doubt that treachery had tampered with the posts which the King had so carefully elaborated. The tidings caused him little uneasiness; or, at least, he affected to despise the danger, relying upon the loyalty of Sir Walter Herbert and Rice Ap Thomas, and their ability to hold in check so contemptible an invading force.‡ The curse of Margaret,

> Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st,
> And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends,

was fallen upon Richard with direful intensity. With purblind infatuation he leaned upon the loyalty of Lord Stanley,

* Owen and Blakeway's "Shrewsbury," p. 247.
† Polydore Vergil, p. 218. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

trusting in the assurances he had given, that his matrimonial connection would never seduce him from the discharge of his duty to his Sovereign. He still held the confidential office of Lord Steward of the King's Household, and, although separated from Richard, must have been in possession of important information which he would readily find means to convey to his son-in-law. He had been permitted to visit his home and family in Lancashire,* and with his son, George Lord Strange, and his brother, Sir William Stanley, was appointed to lead all the forces raised in Lancashire and Cheshire against the invaders. But since Richard's return to Nottingham, repeated summonses had been addressed to Stanley to join him. At length he was ordered to come himself or to send his son in his stead. This explains the presence of Lord Strange at Nottingham, at the time when the King received the tidings of Henry's landing at Milford Haven. A passage in the curious ballad, "The Song of the Lady Bessy," attributed to Humphrey Brereton, a servant of Lord Stanley's, suggests the forebodings with which his father reluctantly allowed Lord Strange to repair to Richard's camp.

When I parted with him his heart did change,
From Lathom to Manchester he rode me by,
Upon Salford Bridge I turned my horse again.
My son George by the hand I bent,
I held so hard forsooth, certain,
That his foremost finger out of the joint went.
I hurt him sore; he did complain,
These words to him then did I say:
"Son, on my blessing, turn home again,
This shall be a token another day." †

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 500.

† Mr. Nichols in his "History of Leicestershire," (vol. iv., p. 552), quotes a passage from the Harl. MSS. in which it is said that Lord Stanley obeyed Richard's summons, but fell sick at Manchester.

The King summoned the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey, and the Earl of Northumberland to join him with all the forces they had recently raised. Sir Robert Brackenbury was ordered "to bring Sir Thomas Bourchier and Sir Walter Hungerford with all the forces they could instantly muster." None of these commanders, however, appear to have joined the King at Nottingham.

Fenn quotes a letter from the Duke of Norfolk to Sir John Paston, Sheriff of the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, from which we gather that he contemplated meeting the King, as indeed he did, between Nottingham and Leicester.

"Well beloved Friends, I commend me to you, letting you to understand that the King's enemies be a-land, and that the King would have set forth upon Monday but only for Our Lady Day; but for certain he goeth forward as upon Tuesday, for a servant of mine brought to me the certainty. Wherefore I pray you that ye meet with me at Bury, for by the grace of God I purpose to lie at Bury as upon Tuesday night, and that ye bring with you such company of tall men as ye may goodly make, at any cost and charge, besides that which ye have promised the King, and I pray you ordain them jackets of my livery and I shall content you at your meeting with me.

"Your lover J. NORFOLK." *

On the 11th of August a writ or proclamation was addressed by the King to William, Earl of Arundel, Warden of the Cinque Ports, that no person is to "fit out any ship

* Fenn's "Original Letters," vol. ii., p. 335.

without giving security nor to attempt anything against the King's subjects, friends, or confederates. If any mayor suffer any ship of war to depart without oath being taken, then he is to satisfy the persons damaged."* This jealous care for the interests of commerce is eminently characteristic of the King, who, in the face of all the prejudices of his age, discerned the true basis of national prosperity, and, single-handed and ill-requited, fought the people's battle against a privileged and merciless oligarchy. He had invited the merchants of Italy and the Hanse Towns to extend their trade to England, and in the hour of greatest peril and most harassing anxiety, he failed not to extend to them, as to his own subjects, a reciprocal protection.

Lord Stanley was again summoned to repair immediately to Nottingham. He excused himself on the plea that he was suffering from the Sweating Sickness. His position was one of much difficulty. If he declared for his son-in-law, his son's life would be certainly forfeited. By temporising, an opportunity for escape might present itself to Lord Strange. But, unknown to his father, such attempt had been already made, and frustrated, with results which determined Lord Stanley's ultimate defection from the royal cause, though for the time constraining him to act with redoubled caution. When captured in his attempted flight, Lord Strange had confessed to a conspiracy which had been entered into by himself, his uncle Sir William Stanley, and Sir John Savage, to go over to the side of the Earl of Richmond.† His

* "Hist. MSS. Commission, Second Report," p. 91.

"Croyland Chronicle," p. 501. There is no authority for the statement of Mr. Sharon Turner and other modern writers that Lord Stanley was directly implicated in this conspiracy. See S. T., vol. iii., p. 539.

THE OLD BLUE BOAR INN, NEAR LEICESTER.

pusillanimity nearly cost him his life; but the King, compassionating his youth and reluctant to credit the disloyalty of Stanley, accepted the young man's vicarious promise that his father, on hearing that his son's offence had been condoned, would immediately obey the royal summons to Nottingham.* Sir William Stanley and Sir John Savage were proclaimed traitors, whilst Lord Strange was strictly guarded and held as a hostage for his father's loyalty. The fact that he found means of warning his father of his danger, and of imploring him to fulfil the promise he had made on his behalf, shows that he suffered no rigid confinement. But Lord Stanley was by this time too deeply committed thus to pass from pillar to post. He marched towards Lichfield with five thousand men, there to await tidings from the King, and, as we shall see, from the Earl.

The enemy was advancing, and Richard recognised the necessity of at once leaving Nottingham, where he had no wish to be attacked. Before this was accomplished the men of York once more evinced their hearty loyalty. By the mouth of their Sergeant of Mace they inquired of the King what aid he required from their city, and their devotion was shewn by the immediate contribution of six hundred armed men in response to their Sovereign's command.† It speaks well for Richard, that he never forfeited the esteem and friendship of those to whom he had been longest and best known.

So completely did Richard's elaborate postal system break down, that he did not hear of Henry's arrival at Shrewsbury

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 502. † Drake, p. 120.

until he was within a few miles of him at Lichfield. Henry entered the town two days after Lord Stanley had vacated it. Although the King was still ignorant of the accession of adherents which Henry was daily receiving, he heard with dismay that he had been permitted to pass through Wales unmolested, and realised how fatally he had underestimated the threatening danger, and how many must have been the traitors against whom he impotently threatened vengeance. "Anger and vengeance," it is said, "united in his face; his good humour left him and never returned."

It is impossible to fix the precise date at which Richard left Nottingham. From the Duke of Norfolk's letter to Sir John Paston, it appears that he was prevented from commencing his march on Monday the 15th of August, from religious considerations, that being the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. On the other hand, Mr. Hutton* thinks that he performed the march of twenty-five miles from Nottingham to Leicester on the 16th. That, however, was the day on which the Council of the City of York—faithful to Richard to the last—had tendered their loyal service. The messenger, on Mr. Hutton's assumption, must have met the King at Leicester or at Stapleton. But it appears that the interview really took place at Bestwood, or Beckwood, a royal park on the confines of Sherwood Forest, and about four miles *north* of Nottingham. Whatever the real cause of delay, it appears certain that the King did not commence his march to Leicester earlier than the 18th. He was now at the head of a powerful army, which was yet to be reinforced by the contingents under Norfolk, Surrey, and Brackenbury.

* "Battle of Bosworth," p. 46.

The troops marched five abreast; Richard, with his body guard and the baggage, being in the middle of the long array, whilst the cavalry formed a wing on either side and kept near the centre.* The King was mounted on his white charger, richly caparisoned, himself gorgeously dressed, but, add the chroniclers, "a dismal and truculent frown" indicating the gnawing anxiety at his heart. Above him floated the royal banner, and around him waved an imposing array of standards surmounted by the Silver Boar, which glistened in the morning sun. His army was ostentatiously arranged, covering the road for three miles, the cavalry forming two wide-spreading wings.† Between Nottingham and Leicester the royal army received frequent reinforcements. This circumstance, combined with the fact that Henry, unlike the Duke of Buckingham, received little support from the English counties, sufficiently disproves the assertion of the Tudor historians, that Richard's fall was the result of open insurrection.‡ He was accompanied to the field by the flower of the English chivalry, and the sympathy of the great majority of the English people.

Henry also was making for Leicester. Between Lichfield and Tamworth, finding that the people were not hostile, he quietly pushed on in advance of his army. Hall and Holinshed relate the following improbable story: Musing on his difficulties the Earl lagged behind his company, who

* "All impedimentes being gatheryd into the middest of tharmy, himself, with his gard, did folow the wings of horsemen ranging on both sydes."—POLYDORE VERGIL, Book xxv., p. 220.

† "Croyland Chronicle."

‡ Sir Gilbert Talbot had joined the Earl of Richmond at Newport with 2,000 men, but it is probable that his troops were for the most part Welsh, and the same is almost certainly true of the 800 "gentlemen and others" who joined him at Shrewsbury.

marched on and entered Tamworth before they missed him. As the night drew on, a report reached him that King Richard was at hand. He had insensibly lost not his companions only, but the highway to Tamworth. Not daring to risk the discovery of himself by asking a guide to the town, he turned aside to a small village hard by where he passed the night. His disappearance occasioned consternation amongst his followers, and whilst he was himself fearful of falling into the hands of the King's scouts, he still more dreaded the moral effects of his misfortune upon his own company. He left the village in the early morning, and had the good fortune to reach Tamworth in safety, to the unspeakable joy of his army. He excused his absence by the pretence that he had been to consult with some private friends who dare not yet appear for him, and so concealed his absent-mindedness.*

If this story has any basis in fact, as we can hardly doubt that it has, the Earl was guilty of an act of injudicious temerity. For, though the men of Lichfield had shown him no hostility, Richard's scouts were numerous, and the temper of the country people was at best uncertain. Yet he only showed himself to his soldiers, and then left them to go to Atherstone.† If he had before, with wanton recklessness, exposed himself to danger, the end he had now in view perhaps justified the risk, which was minimised by the presence of his private guards. His purpose was to meet Lord Stanley and Sir William, who with their troops were in

* More, in Kennett, p. 510.

† *Ibid.* Polydore Vergil here confirms More's story. "After that," he says, "he went privily to Atherstone."

the rear of the King, whose camp at Stapleton Henry may have seen. The distance was about eight miles, but the intervening country is flat, and was then without timber to obstruct the sight. The meeting was cordial and reassuring to Henry, who, ignorant of Lord Stanley's reason for the exercise of caution, had been disappointed and perplexed by his seeming loyalty to Richard. Sir William Stanley had met the Earl at Stafford,* and promised that, on his arrival at Lichfield, he and his brother would openly join him with all the forces at their command. When, however, Lord Stanley, who seems to have halted at Lichfield for this purpose, heard of Henry's approach, he hesitated to commit himself, and marched forward to Atherstone. He had indeed no alternative, unless he was prepared to sacrifice his son. Henry was the slave of a single passion—ambition; but Stanley, whose personal reasons for loyalty to Richard were strong, though his political aversion was inflamed by his wife, was held in check by the most sacred and powerful emotion by which humanity is swayed—parental affection.

Henry could but honour his motives, and they concerted future action with a frankness and cordiality which convinced the Earl that the powerful contingent under the Stanleys would not have to be reckoned with as foes, even should they fail him in active support. After long and careful inquiry, Mr. Hutton identified the meeting-place of Henry and the Stanleys in a little meadow of less than two acres, called in his day the Hall Close,† adjoining the Coleshill road on the

* Polydore Vergil, Book xxv., p. 218.

† "The little close where the whole system of British politics underwent a change, and where the fate of nations was determined."

left, a hundred yards behind the "Three Tuns," the inn which formed Henry's headquarters in Atherstone.

Every day brought new deserters from Richard's camp. Amongst others were Sir Thomas Bourchier and Sir Walter Hungerford (whom Richard, distrusting their loyalty, and desirous of thus preventing their going over to the enemy, had summoned from London under Sir Robert Brackenbury), Sir Simon Digby and Sir John Savage (nephew of the Stanleys), "which greatly replenyshed him with good hope."

It was probably the evening of the 20th of August when Richard arrived at Leicester. The castle, an ancient demesne of John of Gaunt, had been allowed to fall silently into decay and ruin, and had become so dilapidated and unfit for a royal residence, that Richard preferred the accommodation of an inn.* He took up his quarters at the "White Boar" in High Cross Street, opposite the old grammar school, a handsome half-timber house with projecting storeys. Our illustration presents a restored view of a portion of this edifice—a wing of two storeys. The original house had two wings, and a centre which receded four or five yards from the street, having probably a gable above and a wide gateway beneath. The principal apartments were in the wings, the northern one being represented in the woodcut. The old house was pulled down as recently as 1836, and not a vestige remains of the "*White* Boar," by which name it would undoubtedly be known at the date of Richard's visit.† It thus affords an illustration of the fickleness of popular favour. The sign of

* Curtis, "Topog. Hist. of Leicestershire," p. 96.

† The "Blue Boar" in Southgate Street is commonly, but erroneously, believed to occupy the site of the old "White Boar;" and the building, though modern, wears an air of antiquity which lends countenance to this belief.

the "White Boar" (in reference both to the King's cognizance and to the White Rose of the House of York) was common in Richard's time. After the Battle of Bosworth Field the landlords took down their white boars and painted them black or blue; or, when they failed to do so, the rabble pulled them down.* The "Blue Boar" at Leicester gave its name to an adjoining street, still called Blue Boar Lane. Mr. Hutton † relates an anecdote of the King's sojourn at this inn, the authenticity of which has been called in question with no apparent reason. The room, he says, in which Richard lodged, "seems to have been once elegant, though now in disuse. He brought his own bedstead of wood, large, and in some places gilt. It continued there two hundred years after he left the place, and its remains are now (1788) in the possession of Alderman Drake. It had a wooden bottom, and under that a false one. . . . Between these two bottoms were concealed a quantity of gold coin, worth about £300 of our present money, but then worth many times that sum. ‡ Thus he personally watched his treasure and slept on his military chest. Thoresby tells us 'this inn was kept in the reign of Queen Elizabeth by one Clarke, whose wife hastily making the bed, a piece of gold dropt out, which led to the discovery of the rest; some, the King's own coin. Clerk (*sic*) suddenly grew rich with the spoils of Richard, became mayor of the town, and, at his death, left a fat and wealthy widow. Her servant-maid, in 1613, conspiring with her sweetheart, robbed and murdered the mistress, for which they were both

* To this day we are familiar with the sign of the "Black" or "Blue Boar," but who has ever seen a "*White?*"

† "Bosworth Field," p. 48.

‡ Mr. Gairdner estimates £4,500 as the equivalent in our present currency.

brought to justice and executed.' So that Richard's property proved as unfortunate as himself. This room seems to have been the last he ever entered, and the bed the last in which he slept."

The next day, "on the Lord's day before the feast of Bartholomew the Apostle,"* Richard marched out of Leicester in the direction of Stapleton,† passing through St. Nicholas Street and by the old Jewry Walls then hoary with a thousand winters. He was dressed in the same suit of armour, of polished steel, in which fourteen years before he had won the battle of Tewkesbury, with the addition of a helmet, which all the old writers and most modern historians say was surmounted with his crown by way of crest. This is, however, almost certainly, one of the many fictions invented to throw ridicule upon the King's love of pomp and display. That he wore the crown both in the march out of Leicester, and when haranguing his troops on the field of battle, is very probable, and would be in accordance with custom. But that he wore it screwed upon the top of his helmet through a long march and on the field of battle is incredible. "Nothing,"

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 502.

† Mr. Sharon Turner says that he encamped that night "near the Abbey of Mirival, at a distance of about eight miles" from Leicester (vol. iii., p. 502). But Merevale Abbey is near Atherstone, where Henry lay; and as Richard was marching to Stapleton, it is impossible that he could have reached it. Mr. Nichols ("Leicestershire," vol. iv., p. 551) says that he passed that night "at Elmsthorpe, where his officers slept in the church." This is more probable, Elmsthorpe being in his direct line of march to Stapleton. But both writers assume that Richard left Leicester on the 18th, whereas that appears to have been the date on which he left Nottingham. It was, moreover, a Thursday, and we have seen that he left Leicester on Sunday, which was the 21st, and reached Stapleton on the evening of that day. May it not have been the Duke of Norfolk who passed the night of the 18th at Elmsthorpe, his officers sleeping in the church?

says a modern writer, "can be more erroneous than such a statement. Richard was too old and experienced a soldier to put such a head-gear upon his helmet, nor could a real crown . . . . be worn for any rational purpose during a battle. He, however, wore, as a distinguishing mark, and as an emblem of command a comparatively small ornament, resembling a crown, upon his helmet, which was not at all strange or unprecedented." *

The King was accompanied in his march from Leicester by a brilliant retinue, including the Lords Lovell, Ferrers, and Zouche, with numerous knights and gentlemen. It is not improbable, and would be in harmony with his military reputation, that he had already caused a camp to be formed at Stapleton, an elevated site which commanded the whole adjacent country—"not a hill," says Hutton, "but an eminence, fit for observation or contest;" fitter perhaps for the latter purpose than Amyon Hill, about two miles distant, the only higher ground within a circuit of many miles. His camp occupied some ground still known as the Bradshaws; and as a security a breastwork, three hundred yards long, was cast up about fifty yards behind the camp.† These "operations of great labour" led Mr. Hutton to conclude that Richard's stay at Stapleton must have extended over at least three days, and consequently that he must have reached Leicester on the 16th and left that town on the 17th of August. But, in addition to the objections to this view which have been already noticed, the statement of the Croyland chronicler that he left Leicester on the Sunday before the Feast of St. Bartholomew fixes the

* "English Battle Fields," by Richard Brooke, p. 171. † Hutton.

date as the 21st, and this is confirmed by the Rolls of Parliament.* Another reliable authority says "On Seint Bartelmew's *even* he went to the filde at Bosworthe hethe." †

The traces of Richard's camp at Stapleton are rapidly disappearing. In the autumn of 1883 I twice walked over the remains of the breastwork before discovering it. It bisects the field known as the Bradshaws, and only reveals itself to the visitor who has patience to search for it. The ploughshare passes through it, and in a few years it will probably be no longer discoverable. In the estimation of a utilitarian farmer an elevated ridge, two yards wide, bisecting his cornfield, is not a feature worthy of preservation, whilst the ploughman probably regards it as the remains of a clumsily-levelled hedge which it is his business to reduce to a level surface.

On the night of Sunday, the 21st of August, Richard encamped at the Bradshaws, in the parish of Stapleton. Here he was joined by the Duke of Norfolk and his son, the Earl of Surrey, also by Sir Robert Brackenbury, who brought the ominous tidings of the desertion of Bourchier and Hungerford on the previous night. The treachery thus revealed filled the intrepid mind of Richard with consternation. Whom could he trust? Not the Stanleys; one of whom was already a proclaimed traitor: not the Earl of Northumberland, deep as were the obligations he was under to the House of York. But these three men commanded the larger half of his army, and might at any moment go over to the enemy. Treachery

* Vol. vi., p. 276.

† Turpyn's "Chronicle of Calais." Sir Richard Baker says that the King marched from Nottingham on the morning of the 21st, and from Leicester on the evening of the same day.

was the one foe which Richard dreaded. Already it was at work upon a wider scale than he was ever to know; but the apprehension, whilst it stimulated his courage and resolution, deprived him of his habitual serenity, and left his mind a prey to the worst passions of his nature.

Following the old Roman road known as Watling Street, Henry had already reached Atherstone, and it seemed probable that, pursuing the same road, he would encounter the royal army in the vicinity of Hinckley, about four miles distant from Stapleton. Such, indeed, had been Richard's expectation. But Henry, whose forces were inferior in numbers, was indisposed to risk a conflict there. If he had but one soldier of acquired reputation in his camp, he had many who knew the country, and his own sagacity went far to compensate for the lack of experience. In fact, he displayed tactical powers which must have convinced Richard that he had under-estimated the abilities of "that milksop." Hutton states that one John Hardwick, of Lindley near Bosworth, "a man of very short stature, but active and courageous, tendered his service to Henry, with some troops of horse, the night he lay at Atherstone, became his guide to the field, and advised him in the attack and how to profit by the sun and the wind." The number of men under his command has been estimated at from 5,000 to 7,000. The larger estimate is the more probable, as in addition to the 2,000 who landed at Milford Haven and the numbers who flocked to the standard of Cadwallader, Sir Gilbert Talbot had brought with him 2,000 men at Newport, and his ranks had been strengthened by numerous desertions from Richard's army.

Out of compliment to his Welsh supporters, and his own ancestry, Henry adopted the device of the Red Dragon, and after his coronation placed it as one of the supporters of the English arms, a position which it maintained until the accession of James I., when it was superseded by the Scotch unicorn. It is noticeable that the chief characteristics of the heraldic dragon preserve a record of the fauna of King Richard's time, including as they do the head of a wolf, the body of a serpent, the feet of an eagle, and bat-like wings, as well as the allegorical addition of a barbed tongue and tail.

Richard's army outnumbered Henry's in the proportion of—nearly, if not quite—two to one, being, according to the best authorities, 12,000 strong.* In addition to this, Lord Stanley, who was avowedly on Richard's side, commanded 5,000, and Sir William Stanley, 3,000 men. To the former a position was assigned slightly in the rear of the King, whose distrust of him is said to be visibly inscribed on the battle-field by a breastwork where there appeared no danger, and which can have had no other purpose than that of a protection against Stanley. He was thus a source of weakness rather than of strength to Richard, who knew that he would have joined his stepson but for the certainty that his own son's life would be forfeited the moment his defection was discovered. A yet greater danger threatened Richard in the presence of the proclaimed traitor, Sir William Stanley, who, with 3,000 men, had taken his route through Shenton and encamped at the foot of Amyon Hill, not far from

* Hall says "the King's number was double as much and more," p. 414.

the camp of Henry, with whom his plan of action had been arranged at Atherstone. His attitude however was one of neutrality, probably inspired by the hope that he might be able to reconcile himself to the party for whom victory should declare. Thus no inconsiderable portion of the King's army was occupied in watching the two Stanleys, and the disparity in the strength of the actual combatants was considerably lessened.

With the view of magnifying the exploits of Henry, too much stress has been laid upon the physical evidences, even now discernible, of the relative strength of the two armies. True it is that the earthworks of Richard may be traced over a much larger area than those of Henry. But modern cultivation is a dreadful enemy of antiquity, and as Mr. Darwin has taught us, the agency of the earth-worm in that direction is incalculable. But, during the course of four centuries, many agencies have been at work which might well account for the obliteration of landmarks of this nature; nay, four *years* would more than suffice. Moreover, the argument is faulty, as proving too much. For it is simply impossible that 7,000 or even 5,000 men can have manœuvred on six acres of land, or that the whole front line should have been confined within the compass of a few feet.

On the night of the 21st, the commanders of four bodies of troops occupied positions indicated by the angles of a rhomboid parallelogram; Richard at Stapleton, two miles east of Amyon Hill, Lord Stanley half a mile in his rear,* Sir W. Stanley at the foot of the hill on the west side, and

* Upon an eminence called Gamble's Close, on the ridge of which in Hutton's day the vestiges of his camp were yet visible.

Henry at Atherstone. Mr. Hutton assigns them these positions on the night of the 20th, and says that through the whole of the 21st the two armies lay opposite each other on Bosworth Field.* But the authorities above quoted establish the fact that Richard moved out of Leicester on Sunday, the 21st of August, and that he lay that night at Stapleton. It is probable that Henry also marched from Atherstone on the Sunday night.† Passing Wetherley Bridge, he turned to the left along Fen Lane, crossed the little rivulet of Tweed, which divides Bosworth Field from the meadows, and encamped in the first close on the left, in the White Moors, one mile from the top of Amyon Hill and half a one behind Sir William's camp." ‡ The precise position of the two armies is, however, in some measure conjectural. Amyon Hill has a steep descent on every side, steepest on the north. It is probable that Henry occupied the hill itself, whence he would command a full view of Richard's camp.§ A broad and perfectly open plain lay between Amyon Hill, with the morass at its foot, on the west, and Stapleton, on the east.

Richard rose before daylight on the morning of the 22nd of August (answering to our 2nd of September) pale, haggard, and morose. Every reader will recall the powerful scene in which Shakspeare depicts the horrors of that night, the successive risings of the ghosts of Henry VI. and Prince Edward, of Clarence, Rivers, Gray, Vaughan, Hastings, and

* See Hutton's "Bosworth Field," p. 64.

† The fact that Sir Simon Digby penetrated Richard's camp as a spy during the night of the 21st, and had returned to Henry's camp by four o'clock in the morning of the 22nd, appears to lend some countenance to Hutton's theory that Henry left Atherstone on the 20th.

‡ Hutton. § See Brooke's "English Battle Fields," p. 232.

Buckingham, of the two young Princes, and Queen Anne, who with one voice utter that terrible anathema, "Despair and Die!" In this, Shakspeare doubtless follows Holinshed, who writes: "It seemed to him, being asleep, that he saw divers images, like terrible devils, which pulled and haled him, not suffering him to take any quiet or rest. The whole strange vision not so suddenly struck his heart with a sudden fear, but it stuffed his head with many busy and dreadful imaginations. And lest it might be suspected that he was abashed for fear of his enemies, and for that cause looked so piteously, he recited and declared to his familiar friends of the morning his wonderful vision and fearful dream."*

We know that nothing could be more intolerable to Richard than the suspicion of cowardice, and it is very possible that, in explanation of his haggard appearance, he may have mentioned his disturbing dream to those about him. But, as Buck observes, his enemies have dissected his very sleep to find prodigious dreams and bugbears which they dress in all the horror fiction and the stage can add. Again Margaret's curse might seem to have overtaken him,

> No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
> Unless it be while some tormenting dream
> Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils.

Impatient for the dawn, he walked out with the three men whom he had unhappily taken into his closest confidence—Lovell, Catesby, and Ratcliffe. According to tradition he found a sentinel asleep at his post and stabbed him, with the

* Grafton also relates that on the following morning Richard, fearing that his agitation might be mistaken for cowardice, as in the early dawn he walked out with Lord Lovell, Catesby, and Ratcliffe, "recited and declared to his particular friends his wonderful vision."

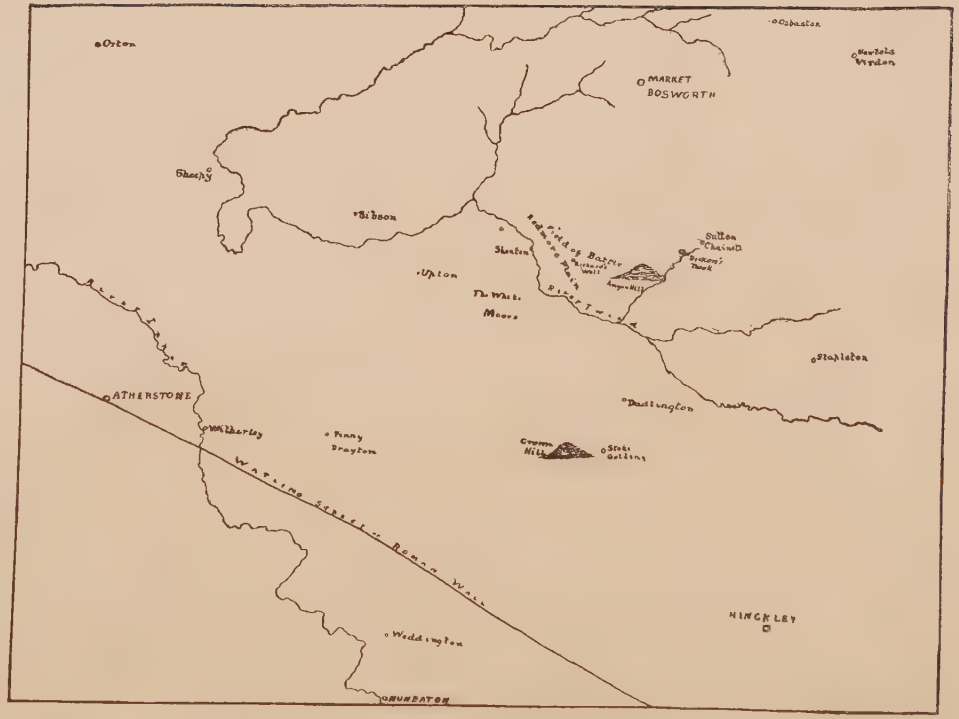
grim remark "I found him asleep, and have left him as I found him." He walked on alone. Not even his closest friends could be admitted to his tragic self-communings. The night was sultry, a dead silence prevailed, and, wearied with soul-travail and sweat of brain, his iron frame succumbed to the unwonted strain.* Still he walked on, unconscious of the dawn, giving no answer to the sentinel's challenge nor heeding his humble apology. The sun arose, there was movement through the army, but the King was alive only to the sense of a strange confusion in the words and actions of the orderly awaking camp. Everything assumed an archaic aspect, every tongue uttered anachronisms. Outraged nature was taking her revenge upon an unwilling and an unconscious violator of her laws.

Such was the frame of mind in which Richard, returning to his tent, found his chaplains unready to say mass, his breakfast unprepared, his most vigilant officers asleep. Prostrated in mind and body he stood, with darkened brow, biting his lower lip,† and spoke dismally of the impending battle and of the butchery which must follow it, declaring that to whichever side the victory might fall, it would prove the utter destruction of the kingdom.‡ "Where now were

* Burton says that Richard was troubled less with his dreams than by a prediction which foretold that "if ever he should come to meet his enemy in a place that was compassed with towns whose termination was in *ton*, that there he should come to great distress." (See Nichols' "Leicestershire," vol. iv., p. 549.) A glance at the map will show how completely Redmoor Plain answered to this description. But had the "prophecy" been uttered before instead of many years after the battle, when we first hear of it, Richard's mind was too free from superstition to have been moved by it.

† It was a habit of Richard's when thinking, or listening to others, to project his upper teeth over his lower lip, a habit in which we have already seen that the chroniclers discover a proof of his depraved and savage character.

‡ "Croyland Chronicle," p. 503.



SECTIONAL MAP OF LEICESTER SHIRE.

castles and high towers," he said, "I will make parks and plains." He swore, says Mr. Nichols, that "from the town of Lancaster to Shrewsbury, knight or squire he would leave none alive, and he would deal their lands to his knights from Holyhead to St. David's Land."* These vindictive utterances may, and do lack authenticity, but "they reflect the temper in which, on either side, the shock of battle was now joined."† For the King accorded to Henry the same savage resolve, which he had that morning formed, of giving no quarter to his foes, and amongst his foes he had already declared that he would number every man "born to the inheritance of any property in the kingdom" who had failed to respond to his universal conscription.‡ He knew also that this day would end the Wars of the Roses, in which, from first to last 105,000 men were slain.

If the thirst for vengeance survived, this fit of depression soon passed. The time for action had arrived. In the words which Shakspeare puts into the King's mouth, he accurately reflects the sudden variations of temper which he frequently displayed, and the strong self-confidence which never forsook him.

> Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge.
> Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:
> Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
> Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
> Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
> March on, join bravely, let us to't pell mell,
> If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

* "Leicestershire," vol. iv., p. 549.
† Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 543.
‡ "Croyland Chronicle," p. 501.

CHAPTER VII.

Early on the morning of the 22nd of August, Richard, leaving his tents standing, drew up his army in order of battle in front of Amyon Hill, then known as One Tree Hill.* From a hillock which that most enterprising and painstaking antiquary, Mr. Hutton, has identified with one still known as Dicken's Nook, he delivered an oration which is reported by Hall. In the absence of any apparent motive for misrepresentation we may suppose this to be a substantially accurate version, though we shall do well to remember Hutton's warning that "these speeches perhaps meet the eye rather mended." The compunction expressed for a past crime doubtless refers to the executions, which were matters of notoriety, and cannot be tortured into an acknowledgment of responsibility for the death of the young Princes. He confessed that it was to the loyalty of those whom he addressed that he owed his crown, and claimed that he had been to them a just Prince, whilst their constancy assured him that he was "an undoubted King." "And," he continues, "although in the adepcion and obtaining of the garland, I,

* Amyon is a contraction of "An-beame," Saxon for One Tree. Both Holinshed and Sir Richard Baker make the curious mistake of giving it a lady's name—Anne Beame!

being seduced and provoked by sinister counsel and diabolical temptation, did commit a facynerous and detestable act, yet I have with strict penance and salt tears (as I trust) expiated and clearly purged the same offence, which abominable crime I require you of friendship as clearly to forget, as I daily do remember to deplore and lament the same, if you will now diligently call to remembrance in what case and perplexity we now stand, and in what doubtful peril we be now intricked. I doubt not but you in heart will think and with mouth confess, that if ever amity and faith prevailed between Prince and subjects, or between subject and subject, or if ever bond of allegiance obliged the vassal to love and serve his natural sovereign lord, or if any obligation of duty bound any Prince to aid and defend his subjects; all these loves, bonds, and duties of necessity are this day to be experienced, showed, and put in experience. For if wise men say true there is some policy in getting, but much more in keeping . . . I doubt not but you know how the devil—continual enemy to human nature, disturber of concord, and sower of sedition —hath entered into the heart of an unknown Welshman (whose father I never knew, nor him personally saw), exciting him to aspire and covet our realm, crown, and dignity, and thereof clearly to deprive and spoil us and our posterity; ye see further how a company of traitors, thieves, outlaws, and runagates of our own nation be aiders and partakers of his feat and enterprise, ready at hand to overcome and oppress us: you see also what a number of beggarly Bretons and faint-hearted Frenchmen be with him, arrived to destroy us, our wives, and children—which imminent mischiefs if we will withstand we must live together like brethren, fight

together like lions, and fear not to die together like men. And observing and keeping this rule and precept, believe me, the fearful hare never fled faster before the greyhound, nor the silly lark before the sparrow-hawk, nor the simple sheep before the ravenous wolf, than your proud, bragging adversaries, astonished and amazed with the only sight of your manly visages, shall flee, run, and skyr out of the field. For, . . . to begin with the Earl of Richmond, captain of this rebellion, he is a Welsh milksop, a man of small courage and of less experience in marshal acts and feats of war, brought up by my brother's means and mine like a captive in a close cage in the Court of Francis, Duke of Brittany, and never saw army . . . nor is able of his own will and experience to guide or rule a hoste. For in the wit and policy of the captain consisteth the chief adepcion of the victory."

He proceeds to express his assurance that Henry will be deserted by his English soldiers when, on sight of the royal banners, they recall their oath of allegiance to their King; and that the French "braggers, drunkards, and cowards," "most effeminate and lascivious people," will fly at the first assault; and continues:

"Wherefore, considering all these advantages, expel out of your thoughts all doubts, and avoid out of your minds all fear, and, like valiant champions, advance forth your standards. . . . Every one give but one sure stroke, and surely the journey is ours. . . . As for me, I assure you, this day I will triumph by glorious victory, or suffer death for immortal fame. . . . Now, by St. George,* let us set forward,

* "Sent George to borowe."

and remember well that I am he which shall with high preferment reward the valiant and hardy champion, and punish and torment the shameful cowards and dreadful dastards." *

Hall observes that this exhortation encouraged all such as favoured Richard, but that many "were present more for dread than love," and that the majority of the royal army were unreliable. It is quite evident that Richard was fully alive to the fact, and that he trusted rather to the cowardice of the enemy than to the loyalty of his own troops.

The royal camp was early astir and busy with preparation for the coming conflict. The better to inspire that panic with which the King probably expected that Henry's troops would be demoralised, he extended his army in line, "stretching it forth to a wonderful length, so full replenished both with footmen and horsemen that to the beholders afar off it gave a terror for the multitude." In the forefront he placed 1,200 archers, under the Duke of Norfolk, flanked by 200 cuirassiers under the Earl of Surrey. Then followed a dense square of bombards,† commanded by the King, clad in armour of burnished steel, and mounted on his favourite snow-white charger. The cavalry in the rear ‡ were commanded by the Earl of Northumberland, a noble bound to the House of York by innumerable obligations. For him the anger of the Nevilles

* "Hall's Chronicle," pp. 415–16.

† This would seem to settle the disputed question whether artillery was used at Bosworth Field. The bombard was a large cannon for discharging both balls and stones. The name expressed the noise made in firing. See Fosbroke's "Antiquities," p. 907. De Comines also states that Charles VIII. supplied Henry "with some pieces of artillery." Book v., p. 161.

‡ Sir Richard Baker (p. 233), says that the rear was composed of 2,000 "mingled" troops, with two wings of cavalry 1,500 strong, "all of them cast into square maniples."

had been braved in the day of their greatest power, and his loyalty at least should have been beyond suspicion. The King had no such confidence in the reliability of Lord Stanley, to whom he sent a command to deploy on his right, towards the north end of the field.

If Richard's address to his troops was appropriate and inspiriting, Henry, though his inferior in intellectual power and in the use of adroit periphrasis, could appeal with equal force to the higher susceptibilities of men who claimed to be in arms against immorality, tyranny, and perfidy. He demanded their support as the vindicator of outraged justice and the avenger of murder. He was at least unstained with the crimes which he imputed to Richard, and he pledged himself to rule in justice over his rightful inheritance. In the event of failure, he reminded them, their situation was desperate; their escape from the vengeance of the usurper impossible.

"Before us be our enemies, and on either side of us be such as I neither surely trust, nor greatly believe, backward we cannot fly. So that here we stand like sheep in a fold . . . between our enemies and our doubtful friends." *

In numbers he admits their inferiority, but victories, he reminds them, are won not by numbers, but by the valour inspired by confidence in a just cause. Union and fearlessness only were needful to ensure success.

From this address, it is clear that Henry was uncertain of the reliability of Lord Stanley, who carried himself so warily as neither to justify Richard's suspicions nor cause disadvantage to the Earl.† Early in the morning Henry had sent

* "Hall's Chronicle," p. 417.

† Sir Richard Baker, p. 233.

Reginald Bray to request his assistance in forming his men, probably reminding him of the compact made at Atherstone. Stanley returned for answer that "the Earl must form them himself," with the equivocal addition that "he would come at a convenient season;" * with which answer, says Polydore Vergil, Henry "was no little vexed, and began to be somewhat appalled." Perhaps Stanley meant no more than that he could not be with the Earl till the moment convenient for open co-operation. The emotions of the father were stronger in his breast than those of the statesman or warrior. At present, he continued to march or halt with Richard. But his resolution was to be yet more cruelly tested.

The plain called the Redmoors, from the colour of the soil—which contrasts with the White moors about Shenton—but known to history as Bosworth Field, was so admirably adapted for a great battle, that it has been suggested that Richard may have deliberately chosen there to meet his foe. Nothing could be more erroneous. The King had encamped at Stapleton to keep a watch upon Hinckley, and the meeting of the two armies on Bosworth Field was fortuitous. The physical aspects of the country are, of course, entirely changed since 1485. Woods and cultivated fields, roads, bridges, and a canal now meet the eye, where four centuries ago all was unenclosed and treeless. But the entire field of battle may be surveyed from many points. It is enclosed within an irregular square, of which Stapleton, Stoke Golden, Shenton, and Sutton Chainell form the angles. An imaginary line drawn due north from Stoke Golden to Market Bosworth would run through the battle-field, which would be bisected

* Hutton, p. 81.

by a line drawn east from Shenton to Sutton. Near the centre of this plain Amyon Hill rises to a height of about two hundred feet, and the elevated ground about Stapleton may be seen two miles to the south-east.

Henry's position was well chosen. Traces of it may still be seen in the wood which now covers the ground in the rear of Amyon Hill. At the foot of the hill was a swamp, caused by a spring hard by, whose waters found no outlet. In spite of modern drainage the soil is still damp and marsh-like. Henry left this morass on his right hand, so rendering it impossible for Richard to attack him on that side. His left and rear were protected by the little river Tweed, which "might serve his men instead of a fortresse," whilst Sir William Stanley became a guard to his front. His camp ran in a straight line from this brook towards Amyon Hill, which, in all probability, he occupied, at least as a point of observation.* It lay straight before him, and the wood at its foot had then no existence.† His army was drawn up in two lines, the archers in front, the billmen in the rear, and the cavalry forming the wings.‡ The principal officers in both armies wore coats of mail and helmets. Every man carried a sword, and, in addition, the cavalry were armed with spears,

* Henry encamped "*on* the hill called Arme Beame."—Sir R. Baker, p. 510.

† The whole district was an open plain. The first enclosure—that of Stoke—was made in 1584. That of Shenton took place in 1546, whilst the manor of Sutton was still open in Hutton's time. The hedge now dividing the manors of Sutton and Shenton runs right along the site of Henry's camp.

‡ Again there is no mention of artillery. That it was present in both armies cannot be reasonably questioned; but there is no evidence that it was brought into action. There is no good authority for the discovery of any trace of it upon the battle-field, whilst Mr. Burton writes (in 1777): "Divers pieces of armour, weapons, and other warlike accoutrements, and many arrow-heads were found here, whereof about twenty years since at the enclosure of the Lordship of Stoke great store were dug up."—*Leicestershire*, p. 44.

and the infantry with bills or battle-axes. There can be little doubt that artillery played a subordinate part in both armies.

Henry's first line was commanded by the Earl of Oxford. The post of honour was due to his military experience—of which Henry had none—and to the sacrifices which his family had made for the House of Lancaster. Henry, assisted by his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, commanded the second line. The French contingent was led by Philibert de Shaundé. Sir Gilbert Talbot commanded the cavalry forming the right wing, and Sir John Savage the left.* Henry's tents of striped green and white, his broad banner pitched beside his own position, "bearing a red fiery dragon fairly wrought upon green and white sarcenet," and his soldiers clad in white coats, were all visible through the mist of the early morning. As the armies sighted each other "they put on their head peces and preparyd to fyght, expectyng thalarme with intentyve care." †

At this moment Sir Robert Brackenbury conveyed a message from the King to Lord Stanley, commanding him, on pain of his son's instant death, to move forward immediately against the enemy. Let Shakspeare describe the sequel:

K. Rich. What says Lord Stanley; will he bring his power?
Messenger. My lord, he doth deny to come.
Norfolk. My lord, the enemy is passed the marsh;
After the battle let George Stanley die.
K. Rich. A thousand hearts are great within my bosom!
Advance our standards, set upon our foes;
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!
Upon them; victory sits on our helms.

* Hall, p. 414. Hutton, pp. 83–4. Baker, p. 233. Mr. Hutton, however, says that the French were led by "an officer of reputation of the name of Barnard."

† Polydore Vergil.

Stanley had, in effect, replied that he disdained to yield to menaces; that if the King thus stained his honour he had other sons, and that he would come at a convenient time. The suggestion which Shakspeare attributes to the Duke of Norfolk is a possible explanation of the non-execution of Richard's order. It is said that, with the view of diverting the King from his cruel purpose, he instantly despatched Brackenbury with a message to Stanley, pressing him to advance without a moment's delay. It is Lord Ferrers, however, whom most authorities represent as interceding for the life of Lord Strange. According to these, when Brackenbury had conveyed Stanley's answer to Richard, he denounced him as a traitor, and, turning to Catesby, ordered him to see to the instant execution of the young Lord Strange. The youth was led from his tent, the executioner, axe in hand, was arranging the block, when Lord Ferrers of Chartley, moved with compassion for the innocent victim, ventured to remonstrate with the infuriated King: "Whatever were the father's crimes," he urged, "the son was innocent, and it would be cruel to punish the innocent for the guilty; that it might bring disgrace upon their arms if any blood was shed that day, except by the sword; that envious tongues had already been too free with his princely character, but this would give them greater scope; that there could be no evil in one day's delay, and then punishment might be inflicted where punishment was due, . . . and, should the rebels be victorious, they would doubly retaliate the death of Strange." * In response to this appeal, Richard is said to have ordered the execution to be delayed until the morrow. The two armies

* Hutton, pp. 92–3.

had been facing each other for four hours. It was now ten o'clock, the morning mist had cleared away and the sun shone brightly.

Hall says that the Earl of Richmond had scarcely finished his address to his troops when the two armies sighted each other, and he thus describes the effect:

"Lord, how hastily the soldiers buckled their helmets, how quickly the archers bent their bows and frushed their feathers, how eagerly the billmen shook their bills and proved their staves, ready to approach and join when the terrible trumpet should sound the bloody blast to victory or death." *

The King's right extended to the declivity of Amyon Hill on the north or Bosworth side, his left towards King Richard's well. The intervening swamp rendered it impossible for him to make the attack. Perhaps his object was to tempt Henry to pass it, and by placing it in his own rear to cut off the possible retreat of Lord Stanley. If so, the ruse was at least partially successful. To the shout of "God and St. George!" † Henry's troops offered battle. Richard's practised eye recognised his rival's mistake. He gazes intently upon the foe, whilst his archers wait with bended bows, and in breathless suspense, the sound of the trumpets of the royal vanguard—the signal for the attack.

The Lancastrians move steadily on. They have passed the morass. Instant is heard the call of Richard's trumpets

* Hall, p. 418.

† "Saint George!" was the cry of the English soldiers when they charged. The author of the "Arts of Warre" enjoins its use: "Item, that all soldiers entering into battle . . . shall have for their common cry and word, 'Saint George, forward!' whereby the soldier is much comforted, and the enemy dismayed, by calling to mind the ancient valour of England, which with that name hath so often been victorious."

and the responsive shout, "St. George, forward!" Led by the Duke of Norfolk, the archers, with bows ready bent, advance. A mighty shout is heard, and the air is darkened by a charge of arrows which fly thicker than snowflakes before a wintry blast. The enemy, "nothing faynt unto the fyght," return a more destructive volley. As at Crécy, "it seemed as if it snowed." Then, we are told, the "armies joined, and came to handstrokes." After a single discharge from their long bows, the Lancastrians, led by Oxford, seized their battle-axes, and with an impetuous rush and a premature cry, "The day is ours!" bore down upon the Duke of Norfolk. A fierce mêlée ensued, but Henry's attenuated front recoiled from the serried ranks and vigorous blows of Richard's billmen.*

The moment was critical. The valuable defence of the swamp was sacrificed. Another rush of Henry's forces, and the Duke of Norfolk would have wheeled round Oxford's right flank and surrounded them. Henry seemed to warrant the description Richard had given of him as a man of little experience, who "never saw army, nor is able of himself to guide one." This could not be said of the Earl of Oxford, who, perceiving the danger, gave orders that not a man should move ten feet from the standard."† Fighting ceased. The Yorkists, suspecting a stratagem, showed signs of demoralisation, which Oxford was quick to note. Suddenly condensing

* According to Hall, it was at this moment that Lord Stanley went over to the Earl of Richmond. But the inaccuracy of this chronicler is as conspicuous as his violent partisanship. His carelessness is utterly inexcusable, when, for instance (p. 419), he gives the date of this battle the 22nd of August, 1486, and his uncorroborated statements are valueless.

† Polydore Vergil, p. 223.

his front, to avoid being surrounded by the enemy, he attacked the Duke of Norfolk's division, his men gaining the advantage of having the sun behind them, whilst its fierce rays blinded the eyes of the Yorkists. This was a tactical move of much advantage when bows and arrows were the principal instruments of warfare. After Oxford's charge the Duke of Norfolk changed the order of battle, widened his first line, but closed and enlarged his second, and then renewed the combat with greater fierceness.*

Lord Stanley had thus far been an anxious spectator. He had every reason to believe that his son had fallen a victim to Richard's vengeance; he now advanced with his company and joined Henry's right, throwing the King's van into confusion. Richard's army was now placed between that of Henry and the contingent under Sir William Stanley, which, being too weak to attack the King, and jealously watched by the Duke of Norfolk, was for the moment reduced to impotency. But any satisfaction which Richard may have drawn from this, was more than neutralised by the discovery that the Earl of Northumberland had failed to bring his troops into action. They grounded their arms as a sign to Henry that he had nothing to fear from them.

Richard's position was now critical, if not desperate. "Where he had conferred so much he suspected little." But in truth few of his officers were more reliable than Northumberland had proved. The efforts of such as were loyal were rendered unavailing by the irresolution of those who waited to side with the conqueror. Northumberland now drew off his

* Sir R. Baker, p. 512.

men to a short distance. His attitude is accurately described in the frequently quoted lines of Drayton:

> He doth but vainly look
> For succours from the great Northumberland this while,
> That from the battle *scarce three-quarters of a mile,*
> Stood with his power of horse; nor once did seem to stir.

Some faithful knights, seeing the King's ranks thinned by deserters and suspecting further treason, brought him a fresh charger, entreating him to seek safety in flight ere all was lost. "Bring me my battle-axe," exclaimed Richard, "and fix my crown of gold upon my head, for by Him that shaped both sea and land, King of England this day will I die." * For him there were but two alternatives—victory or death; "such huge force of mynd he had." † He had desired to stake everything upon a single-handed combat with Henry. Twice had his horse been killed under him, whilst in the thickest of the fight he sought the Earl, and, it is said, fought only with such as he supposed to be him. Thus Shakspeare, following the old chroniclers, makes him say:

> I think there be six Richmonds in the field,
> Five have I slain to-day instead of him.

Now that Northumberland and Stanley had proved traitors, and "perceiving the soldiers faintly and nothing courageously to set on their enemies," ‡ he knew that the chances of victory were against him. The hope of a personal encounter with Henry was all that remained to him, and he resolved to fight his way to him and settle their differences in single combat, or to perish in the attempt.§ Scouts were sent out, charged

* Harl. MSS., 542. † Polydore Vergil. ‡ *Ibid.* § Grafton.

to discover the Earl's quarters. Meanwhile, news was brought to the King that the Earl of Surrey was taken prisoner, and that his father, the Duke of Norfolk, had fallen.

Norfolk and Oxford were first cousins. They had lived together in friendship and mutual esteem, which the tragic events of this cruel age had transformed into intensest hate, the greater, that Oxford knew the Duke of Norfolk to be almost the only general in Richard's army who heartily espoused the royal cause. Though their features were concealed by their helmets, they recognised each other by the devices on their ensigns. They now met in deadly combat; first with their lances. When these were shivered to pieces, each drew his sword—the fearful combat was renewed. Norfolk gave the first blow at his adversary's head, but the sword glancing off his helmet inflicted a wound in his left arm. His savage rage intensified by the sight of blood, Oxford returned the blow. A single stroke from his powerful arm hewed the visor from Norfolk's helmet. With his face bare, the odds were now desperately against him. He might yet choose between death, surrender, and flight. But the latent savage in Oxford was still under control. Disdaining to fight an adversary unguarded, he declined the combat, and retreated a few paces. But a bow drawn at a venture by an unseen hand did the murderous work from which Oxford chivalrously shrank. Struck in the face by an arrow which pierced the brain, John Howard, the first Duke of Norfolk, the fairest of England's nobility since Rivers died on the scaffold, and Richard's truest friend, fell bravely in defence of a cause which he believed to be just, and of a sovereign whom he loved. Then it was that the Earl of Surrey, rushing

forward to avenge his noble father's death, was overpowered by Sir John Savage and Gilbert Talbot. But though compelled to surrender his sword, it was not until, with one last effort, he had used it to strike off the arm of one who had attempted to seize it. It is said that a friendly hand—probably that of Sir Simon Digby—had that morning conveyed to him a warning which he disdained to heed. It was couched in a doggrel rhyme pinned on the door of his tent:

> Jack of Norfolk, be not too bold,
> For Dickon thy master is bought and sold.

None knew the Duke's character better than his cousin and his foe, who exclaimed, as Norfolk lay dead before him on the battle-field, "A better knight could not die, though he might in a better cause." *

The battle had lasted an hour. Only the front line of either army had been engaged, and, until Stanley's defection, neither could be said to have gained any material advantage. But if Richard had other able commanders, he well knew that in Norfolk and Surrey he had lost the two ablest upon whose loyalty he could rely. He had taken Norfolk's command, and was endeavouring to encourage his van to attack the Earl of Oxford on the southern slope of Amyon Hill, when a scout informed him that Richmond was posted behind the hill, with a slender attendance. Here was the opportunity of a personal encounter, which since the action commenced he had sought in vain. His courage was invincible, and his resolution was instantly taken. The enterprise was a desperate one, but his situation was desperate. The defection of Stanley

* Hutton.

had deprived him of the advantage of numerical superiority. The neutral attitude of Northumberland and of Sir William Stanley might at any moment become one of hostility. His troops had already shown signs of demoralisation, whilst those of Henry were animated with enthusiasm, and the courage of men who had staked everything upon the issue of that day's conflict. After slaking his thirst at a spring, still known to all the country side as King Dick's Well,* he sprang to his horse, exclaiming: "Let all true knights attend me, and I will soon put an end to the quarrel; but if none will follow I will try the cause alone."† Crushing his spurs in the sides of his courser, and followed by Lords Lovell and Ferrers, Ratcliffe, Catesby, Brackenbury, and Clifton, with their followers, he was upon the little group surrounding Henry almost before they were aware of his daring purpose. Straight at his rival, with an impetuosity like that of the wild boar, his spear fixed firmly in its rest, he rushed with a desperate ferocity which appalled the stoutest-hearted of Henry's friends. But Henry was surrounded by men, every one of whom was ready to sell his life dearly in his defence. The shock of Richard's desperate onslaught was borne by Sir William Brandon, the Earl's standard-bearer, carrying the ensign of Cadwallader, the last King of the Britons. At one stroke Richard cleft his helmet. The knight lay senseless at his feet; the King seized the standard, shook it, and flung it to the ground. Onward he pressed, and

* Early in the present century Dr. S. Parr identified this well, which he describes as in dirty, mossy ground, and in danger of being destroyed by the cattle. He caused it to be protected by a solid stone structure, open to the south, and composed an appropriate inscription in Latin, which is cut in the stone in small Roman characters.

† Hutton, p. 108.

brave knights fell before and around him, whilst his loyal friends, Lord Ferrers, Brackenbury, and Clifton, court and meet death in their faithful service.

Richard thought of nothing but to cut his way to Henry. But his first terrific charge could not be repeated, and he was now confronted with the powerful figure of Sir John Cheney. Well mounted, and of physical strength immensely superior to Richard's, Sir John challenged the King, and, as if by superhuman strength, was instantly unhorsed and disabled. Fortune seemed to favour Richard. He "was winning a battle by consternation on one side and valour on the other." * He has cut his way to Henry. The supreme moment has come, and moments will now decide the fate of armies and of nations. Richard and Henry are engaged in mortal combat. One or both must die. Although the King is not unattended, his adherents are greatly outnumbered by those of Henry, who crowd between the combatants. Richard, though small in stature if not weak in body, and exhausted with his tremendous onslaught, has again "more than balanced the doubtful struggle." At this moment the ominous cry, "A Stanley! a Stanley!" pierces the din of battle. There is a movement on the field, where the two armies appear to have watched the single combat in anxious suspense. Sir William Stanley, seeing the dangerous crisis, and Richard's impending triumph, has brought his men into action. Wheeling round from the position in which Richard's cavalry had held him in check, his troops took up a position between the combatants and the royal army, one also in which Lord Stanley was able to support him.† Catesby was the first to recognise the

* Hutton. † Baker, p. 512. Sharon Turner, vol. iii., p. 548.

fatal consequences of this decisive movement. Determined to seek safety for himself in flight, he urged Richard to flee with him, representing that there was no disgrace in declining a conflict against overwhelming odds. Horses were brought, and the King was entreated to mount. Richard scorned the counsel, and with an angry look branded Catesby for a coward. Pointing to his crown, he again declared that he would die King of England.* He knew that all was lost; that, vanquished by treachery alone, he must die or yield. With a cry of "Treason!" he dealt blows right and left, resolved to sell his life as dearly as he could. "He continued his ferocity," says Mr. Hutton, "till, his powers and his friends failing—for every one of his followers was either fallen or fled—he stood single in centre of his enemies, when, becoming less desperate through weakness, many durst approach within the length of a sword, who, some minutes before, durst not venture within the length of a spear." His own wounds were numerous, but to the last he defended himself. His helmet, "like a cullendar, was full of holes," and, with the word "Treason!" upon his lips, he fell—fell bravely, as became the soldier and the King. He fell, fighting an army; spared the humiliation, more bitter than death, of witnessing the precipitate flight of the whole body of his troops.

A scene of carnage ensued, the royal troops being pursued as far as Stoke Golden, where, by Henry's order, the useless

* All accounts agree as to the fact; though some differ as to the motives which induced Richard to decline flight. In "The True Tragedy of Richard III.," printed in 1594, or three years before Shakspeare's drama, the following words are put into the mouth of the King: "Fly, villain! Look I as though I would fly? No, first shall this dull and senseless ball of earth receive my body cold and void of sense."—HAZLITT'S *Shakspeare Library*, vol. v., p. 100.

slaughter was arrested. Henry took up a position just outside the town, on an eminence thenceforward known as Crown Hill, four miles south of Bosworth in a direct line. The whole field of battle lay before him. It was held by his own troops. The dead and dying around him were all that remained of the royalist forces. Never was a great and powerful army so utterly obliterated. The battle lasted barely two hours. Within forty minutes, nearly 12,000 of the 20,000 men whom Richard brought into the field deserted to the enemy, 1,000 were slain, and 7,000 were fugitives. Richard's army was blotted out.

Richard III. was the victim of unparalleled treachery; of the treachery of men whom with equal generosity and imprudence he had loaded with favours. Had he been the implacable tyrant depicted by historians, Lord Stanley and the Countess would have shared the fate of Hastings, and his reign might have been long and glorious, one from which an admiring and grateful posterity would have dated the birth of the arts, the dispelling of the clouds of ignorance and superstition, the freedom of humanity, and the growth of commerce, civilisation, and religion, which would have made England arbitress of Europe. The nation had no share in Richard's overthrow. It was the work of three disaffected noblemen, an exiled bishop, and a scheming woman spared by her sovereign's clemency. To attribute it to a national revolt is to surrender the judgment to prejudice. It is more; for it makes blindness a convenient pretext for ignoring the plainest facts.*

* Six years after the death of Richard, an incident occurred at York which shows that even at that time men spoke disparagingly of him at their peril. In a drunken brawl in an alehouse in Skeldersgate, one John Poynter said to

It is remarkable that no description of the battle of Bosworth Field by an eye-witness has come down to us. The reason that has been assigned is that so few officers could write. But it is now ascertained that a manuscript, evidently contemporary, and extending over four or five quires, containing an account of the battle, has been lost through carelessness. In removing a wainscot in the house of a Mr. Roberts, a quantity of old manuscripts were discovered; but as no value seemed to be attached to them, they were actually destroyed by the cook for culinary purposes. Meanwhile, the portion relating to the battle of Bosworth Field had been read in the family, and such details as could be gathered from the only survivor, many years later, were in perfect agreement with ascertained facts.* There are no material discrepancies in the fragmentary narratives which have come down to us. The number of the slain, including those who were slaughtered in flight, probably did not exceed 1,100, and of these not more than 100 were on the Lancastrian side. The only man of eminence whom Henry lost was Sir W. Brandon, his standard-bearer, and he appears to have survived the battle some months. The young Lord Strange had been committed by Richard to

William Burton, a schoolmaster of St. Leonards, that the Earl of Northumberland was a traitor to the King; whereupon Burton retorted that King Richard was a hypocrite and a hunchback, and had been buried in a ditch like a dog. The Yorkshireman angrily replied that he lied, for the King's good grace had buried him like a noble gentleman; and when the schoolmaster, who "was distempide awther wt aill or wyn," applied an opprobrious epithet to the late King, Poynter threatened to strike him with his stick for the insult. The Prior of Bolton, who "was at his disporte" with the rest, interposed, but Poynter and his fellows would not allow the insult to Richard to pass unavenged until they were taken before the mayor and bound over to keep the peace. —DAVIES' *York Records*, pp. 220–4.

* See Nichols' "Leicestershire," vol. iv., p. 554.

the custody of the keepers of his tent. After the battle, "proclamation was made to know where the childe was." His jailers submitted themselves to him as prisoners, and, we are told "he gently received them and brought them to the new proclaimed King, where of him and of his father he was received with great joy and gladness."* Of the Yorkists, the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Sir William Conyers, Sir Robert Brackenbury, and Sir Gervis Clifton fell. Catesby, although he made good his escape at Bosworth, was taken a few days later and beheaded at Leicester.† Lord Lovell also escaped, and we hear of him no more until the rebellion of Lambert Simnel, for participation in which he deservedly suffered.

The peculiar horrors incident to civil war received signal illustration at Bosworth Field. Henry and Richard were cousins; so also, as we have seen, were the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Oxford. Hungerford, who had served under Brackenbury, forsook his leader and deserted to the enemy. It was their fortune to meet on the field of Bosworth, when the steadfast Brackenbury bitterly reproached his quondam friend for deserting his sovereign. Hungerford replied "he would return him something more solid than words," and one blow from his battle-axe shattered his adversary's shield. With a sense of knightly honour Hungerford handed his own target to his squire, saying to Brackenbury that he would take no advantage of a naked antagonist, they would

* Hall, p. 421.

† With him also suffered Sir John Buck, taken prisoner at Bosworth Field. His descendant, Sir George Buck, a century later, avenged his relative's death by writing a vindication of Richard III. In spite of the strong bias of the writer, his history is fairly accurate and of great value to the historical student.

now fight on equal terms. But he forgot that, though equal in arms, vigorous youth was pitted against old age. The conflict was renewed, each warrior aiming furious blows at the other's head. Youth of course prevailed; Brackenbury's helmet was battered to pieces and himself grievously wounded. As Hungerford struck the last mortal blow a voice was heard to exclaim: "Brave Hungerford, spare his life, *he has been our friend!*" But it was too late. His gray hairs clotted with blood, the faithful Brackenbury fell—battered to death by the hand of a friend.

Sir John Byron and Sir Gervis Clifton, two Nottinghamshire gentlemen, had been intimate friends and neighbours. They were now found in opposite camps. But in this case friendship was true enough to bear the strain of party division, notwithstanding that each was a strenuous supporter of rival factions. The evening previous to Richard's departure from Nottingham was passed by the two friends at the house of Sir Gervis Clifton, when they entered into a solemn compact that, if either of them was vanquished, the other should intercede with the conqueror that the estate of the loser might not be forfeited, but secured to his family.* When Clifton fell, attempting the succour of his sovereign in his final struggle, Byron quitted the ranks and ran to the relief of his friend, guarded him with his shield at the risk of his own life, and entreated him to surrender. Clifton replied that with him all was over, and reminded his friend of the oath between them. The lips that were ready to confirm that oath were paralysed by the sight of the pallid face before

* Bailey's "Nottinghamshire," vol. i., p. 344. Hutton, p. 118.

him, and Byron could only exclaim: "Stay, my dear Clifton, stay!" His friend, though his foe in arms, lay lifeless in his embrace. But fourteen years had passed since his father died for espousing the cause in opposing which the son was now slain.

With the exception of Catesby, Buck, and two West-country gentlemen of the name of Brecher, whose only offence appears to have been that they were yeomen of the Crown,* there were no vindictive executions after the battle. On the contrary, Henry did what he could to arrest the pursuit of the fugitives and the indiscriminate slaughter attending it. But he covered himself with infamy by permitting indignities, which would have disgraced untutored savages, to be perpetrated upon the body of the unfortunate King. The corpse, perfectly naked, with a halter round the neck, was thrown across the back of a horse, "trussed behind a pursuivant of arms called Blanche Senglier or White Boar, like a hog or a calf." † The coarse brutality of this jesting allusion to Richard's cognizance elicits no remonstrance from the chroniclers, who seem to gloat over the scene.‡ With the head and arms "dangling on one side of the horse," continues Hall, "and the legs on the other side, and all besprinkled with mire and blood;" the head, says another, "lately adorned with a crown dangling like a thrum-

* "Croyland Chronicle," p. 504. † Hall, p. 421.

‡ Blanc Sanglier was the name of the herald sent by Richard to announce his succession to the English throne to Louis XI. It *may* be that this was actually the name of the pursuivant behind whom his remains were conveyed to Leicester; but it is far more probable that the man was so called in coarse buffoonery. I find no authority for Mr. Nichols' suggestion that he was permitted from importunity to take the body of his master to Leicester for decent burial.—*Leicestershire*, vol. i., p. 381.

BOW BRIDGE, LEICESTER, SHOWING THE OLD BRIDGE OF A SINGLE SPAN.

mop"—the corpse was conveyed to Leicester and there exposed to view for two days, that no evidence of the King's death might be lacking.* It then received unceremonious burial at the Grey Friars' Church, where it rested for about fifty years.† Henry VII., indeed, when the rancour of Richard's enemies had somewhat abated, erected a monument over his grave with an effigy in alabaster. At the destruction of the religious houses this was ruthlessly demolished, and his remains are said to have been lost. Other authorities say that his body was carried out of the town and contemptuously bestowed under the end of Bow Bridge. ‡ The only indication of its resting-place is a tablet on the wall of the house adjoining the bridge, with the inscription, "Near this place lie the remains of Richard III., the last of the Plantagenets."

Tradition has associated this bridge with the memory of Richard in other ways. A wise woman is said to have foretold, "Where his spur struck his head should be broken." On the bridge stood a stone of some height, against which, as the King passed towards Stapleton, he accidentally struck his spur; as he was brought back his head was dashed and broken against the same stone! § No trace remained in the seventeenth century of his grave at the Franciscan monastery, but

* Hume's comment upon this tragical event is that Richard "perished by a fate too mild and honourable"!—HUME, vol. iii., p. 295.

† "Within the town was an House of Franciscan or Grey Friars . . . whither the dead body of King Richard III. was brought."—BURTON'S *Leicestershire*, p. 149. The copy of this book in the Manchester Free Library contains the following pencil note in the margin:

"My great-grandfather, Richard Garle, bought this mansion house of Grey Friars in 1752.—J. GARLE-BROWN."

As no trace of Richard's grave then remained, it is more than doubtful whether the memorial pillar subsequently erected marked the exact spot.

‡ See Sir Richard Baker's "Chronicle," p. 235. § *Ibid.*

the stone coffin which originally contained his remains was then used as a drinking trough for horses at the "White Horse Inn" in Belgrave Gate (then called Gallow Tree Gate).* Hutton says that in 1758 he discovered that the coffin itself had been broken up, and some of the pieces placed as steps in a cellar at the same inn.

Henry, as we have seen, had consecrated his enterprise with prayer. And so, when the victory was won, he knelt down in the presence of his army, and returned thanks to Him whose protection he had invoked, and whose cause he perhaps believed himself to be defending. Then, as now, the hill on which Henry stood was covered with thorn-bushes. In one of these Richard's crown had been found, having probably been secreted by one who dared not carry it from the field in the light of day. It is dangerous to call in question the rustic belief that it was in one of the bushes now growing on the hill. Henry immortalised the incident by adopting the device of a crown on a hawthorn bush, which may still be seen at either end of his tomb in Westminster Abbey.† The battered crown, whether found by or delivered to Sir Reginald Bray, was conveyed by him to Sir William Stanley and by him to his brother. Henry was addressing the troops, extolling their valour and promising them adequate rewards. The soldiers responded with cries of "Long live King Henry!" Emu-

* Hutton, p. 141. Sir R. Baker, p. 235. The Rev. Samuel Carte, vicar of St. Martin's in Leicester, writes in 1720: "I know no other evidence that the stone coffin formerly used for a horse trough was King Richard's but the constancy of the tradition."—NICHOLS' *Leicestershire*, vol. i., p. 298.

† See Sharon Turner and others. It has, however, with greater probability been suggested that this device was the crest of Sir Reginald Bray, more distinguished as an architect than as a warrior, and under whose auspices the chapel was built.

lating the practice of Roman generals under the empire, who invested their favourites with the purple on the field of battle, Lord Stanley seized this moment of enthusiasm to place the crown upon Henry's head, and salute him as King. The spot upon which this ceremony was performed bears to this day the name of Crown Hill.

There is perhaps hardly another battle-field in England in which the exact locality of every remarkable incident is so readily identified, either by physical traces, which, though marked by "decay's effacing fingers," the practised eye readily discovers, or which may be traced by commemorative names handed down by tradition.* When the manor, in which Crown Hill is situated, was enclosed, the hill was divided into four parts, one of which was called Holloa Hill. This name is said to have had its derivation in the "holloing" of the soldiers when Henry was proclaimed King. "Tradition tells us that they raised their voices to the highest pitch to inform their companions in Bosworth Field, in full view of each other across the valley, that the pursuit was over and the victory complete." † It is more probable, however, that "Holloa" is a corruption of Hollow. This portion of the hill, consisting of about five acres, presents to the eye a series of hollows, which are believed to mark the graves of those who fell in the battle, and were

* The country people long held to the belief that the little rivulet of Tweed would ever run with blood after the battle of Bosworth Field. "The battle being fought in a dry season much of the blood would lodge upon the ground, become baked with the sun, and be the longer in washing off." The blood of the slain did actually tinge the water of the little stream long after the battle. "Possessed with this opinion," says Hutton, "they refuse to drink it, while King Richard's Well on the other side of the hill has had by the nymphs and the swains many an hogshead of sugar dissolved in its water."

† Hutton, p. 133.

promiscuously tumbled into deep trenches. As the bodies decayed the soil would sink into hollows, and the fact would almost inevitably give a local designation to the hill. The enclosure took place exactly one hundred years after the battle of Bosworth Field, when the physical features of the locality now known as Crown Hill Hollows would probably be the same as to-day.

Henry bore his success with dignity and moderation, neither prodigally rewarding his friends nor vindictively avenging himself upon his enemies. His crafty, but powerful friend, Rice ap Thomas, with ten others, was knighted on the battle-field; and Reginald Bray, whose luck it had been to find Richard's crown, was created knight-banneret. Had the description of the battle by an eye-witness been preserved, it is impossible to doubt that light would have been thrown upon more than one interesting, but now insoluble, historical problem. No one had contributed more to the success of Henry than Sir William Stanley. His action at a critical moment had decided the fate of battle. He was nearly allied to Henry, being his titular uncle, and had been the first to congratulate him on his victory. Yet his name does not appear amongst those who received marks of Henry's gratitude. The explanation suggested by Lord Bacon is that Henry VII. was aware that, if he owed his life and crown to Sir William Stanley, his temporising policy had seriously jeopardised both, and, although he made him his Chamberlain, his end was unfortunate. The King winked, he says, "at the great spoils of Bosworth Fields, which came almost wholly to this man's hand, to his infinite enriching." * But his ambition was unassuaged. The Earldom of Chester had long been

* Bacon, in Kennett, p. 611.

considered a royal title, as an appanage of the Principality of Wales. Sir William Stanley became a suitor for it, and the occasion—for which Henry waited—was seized for his disgrace. The intemperateness of his ambition was but a plea. Jealousy, distrust, and a recollection of his prolonged neutrality on Bosworth Field were the true grounds of the King's displeasure. Yet Sir William seems never to have really wavered. In an account of the battle in the Harleian MSS., it is related that a messenger having informed him that Lord Stanley would fight for Richard within three hours, he replied, "That would I not for all the world in Christentie." Accused of treason he was afterwards beheaded.

Henry's moderation in distributing honours contrasts with the prodigality with which Richard had, as More says, with large gifts procured for himself unsteadfast friendships. Three only of those to whom he owed his throne received any distinguishing mark of the royal favour. Lord Stanley became Earl of Derby, Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, was created Duke of Bedford, and Philibert de Shanudé, the leader of his French mercenaries, became Earl of Bath.

But whilst Henry's comparative freedom from vindictiveness demands recognition, the list of attainders sanctioned by his first Parliament was so comprehensive that the Act had to be afterwards cancelled. In the long roll, we meet with the name of John Kendall, Richard's secretary, who fell on Bosworth Field, and many others whose only offence had been the recognition of the *de facto* government. Many of Henry's adherents were against these wholesale attainders, "but it would not be, for it was the King's pleasure."* When, therefore, it is claimed for Henry that he was free

* "The Plumpton Correspondence," p. 49.

from the vindictive cruelty sanctioned by his age, we must remember *the standard* to which the appeal is made. A comparison between him and the late King would be all in Richard's favour. To Henry the opportunity came, which Richard had vainly sought, of burying in oblivion the fierce strifes of the past, and, by subordinating personal ambition to the public weal, of preparing the country for participation in the fruits of that new enthusiasm for learning with which both monarchs sympathised. But Henry was too anxious to maintain the throne which he had usurped, to reflect upon the unsparing severity of the measures employed, or to emulate the noble chivalry of Richard in his bearing towards women, whom he persecuted with barbarous severity inspired by fear.

By the apologists of Richard III. many ingenious parallels have been drawn, with the purpose of showing that the very crimes laid to his charge have, in the case of others, been construed into virtues, or at least extenuated, where success has attended their perpetration. Illustrations have been drawn from every dynasty, from the Normans to the House of Brunswick. It is a sufficient objection to the relevancy of many of these, to note the different maxims which, at widely separated epochs, have regulated private and public morality. No such objection can be urged to a comparison between Richard and his conqueror and successor Henry VII., whilst none more strikingly establishes the fact that malice and detraction have pursued the one and spared the other, inspired by a base worship of success rather than reprobation of crime.

If Richard's title to the crown was defective, Henry's was yet more so, unless we allow that of robbery, which is

euphemised into right of conquest. If Richard supplanted others having a better title than himself, there were at least ten whose hereditary claims took admitted precedence of those of the Earl of Richmond. Eschewing the charge of his complicity in the murder of the Princes—of which overwhelming evidence must have been available had the stories of his accusers been conformable to fact—it must be admitted that Richard's treatment of the family of Edward IV. was both politic and generous. One and all of them had reason to rue the day that brought them under the cruel hand of Henry Tudor. The widow of Edward suffered the confiscation of her property, on the frivolous charge of having delivered her sons to the guardianship of the Protector. She was confined to Bermondsey Abbey, where, says Sir George Buck, "she lived not long, care and grief untwisting the thread of her sad fate." Her daughter Elizabeth was not a happy wife, whilst another daughter, Bridget, was confined in a nunnery at Dartford, the object being that she should die without issue. The same fear influenced Henry in his treatment of her sister Cecily, whom Richard had promised in marriage to the son of King James III. of Scotland, and whose hand Louis XI. had sought for the Dauphin of France. The issue of such marriages would have been a source of anxiety to Henry, and he therefore constrained her to marry "a base fellow" that her issue might be ignoble and incapable of inheriting the crown.

Not less base was his treachery to Edmund de la Pole, the brother and heir of John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, and nephew of Edward IV., whom Richard had proclaimed his heir-apparent. Edmund had found an asylum with the Duke

of Burgundy. The Duke and Duchess passing into Spain, had been driven by a tempest upon the English coast, and the illness of the latter induced the Duke to land at Weymouth. Henry resolved to detain him, and the urgent importunities of the royal pair to be allowed to re-embark, were disregarded. They were hurried to Windsor, where they were magnificently entertained, but soon discovered that Henry's alleged desire to show them fitting hospitality was not his real motive in constraining their presence. He proposed a treaty for the surrender of Edmund de la Pole. It was in vain that the Duke protested that he could not thus blemish his honour. Henry was inexorable. The Duke was his prisoner and could purchase his liberty upon no other terms than the surrender of his guest. To this he was fain to consent, after securing some honourable conditions, and a pledge from the King that "he should neither lay punishment nor death" upon the Pretender. By treachery he was allured on board an English ship, and, on his arrival in England, the King, in defiance of engagements to which he had "strictly and religiously bound himself," threw him into the Tower. He respected his vow not to impose the penalty of death, but took a pledge from his son and successor to inflict it. Nor was the Tudor thirst for vengeance satiated by the execution of the unfortunate son of the Duke of Suffolk. The Lady Margaret Plantagenet, daughter of the Duke of Clarence, at sixty years of age was attainted of treason, condemned unheard, and "dragged to the block barbarously by the hair of her head." * Her eldest son, Sir Henry Pole, shared her fate, and his brother Reynold

* Sir George Buck, p. 142.

was attainted of treason, "no man knowing what the treason was."

An instance of tyranny alleged against Richard was the confinement of his nephew Edward, Earl of Warwick, at Sheriff Hutton. It was an act of policy which the circumstances of the time demanded if they did not justify, and it did not prevent Richard from making his "prisoner" his heir. Moreover the confinement was entirely nominal. We meet with the young Earl in London, at Warwick, at Middleham, at York, and his training was as we have seen an object of solicitude to Richard, whilst at Sheriff Hutton he had "a goodly and pleasant house of his own, large diet, all pleasure and safety." "This," says Sir George Buck, "was tyranny, according to Sir Thomas More." But, "when Henry VII., as soon as he had got the crown, sent this young Prince to the Tower, afterwards cut off his head; yet that was no tyranny after Sir Thomas More."

Henry's treatment of the young Earl of Warwick has left a deadly stain upon his character. To the exclusion of both Richard and Henry, he was the only true heir to the throne. In him alone the Plantagenet race, which had reigned in England for nearly four centuries, survived. Shortly after his accession, Henry sent Sir Robert Willoughby to Sheriff Hutton to seize this inoffensive and weak-minded Prince, whom he consigned to the charge of his mother the Countess of Richmond, (Stanley). Mr. T. Duffus Hardy considers that this well-authenticated fact disposes of the statement that one of the first acts of Henry VII. was to consign this unfortunate boy of fifteen to "the ominous Tower of London." Hall, at least, was unlikely to record a fact so discreditable to Henry had it

not been too well authenticated for denial. He says that, "Sir Robert Willoughby, according to his commission, received of the constable at the castle the Earl Edward, and had him conveyed to London, where the youth, born to perpetual calamity, was incontinent in the Tower of London put under safe and sure custody." * Mr. Hardy relies upon a document in the Public Record Office, of which it will be sufficient to quote the following passage: "Feb. 24th, 1st Henry VII. . . . For as much as our own dear mother at our singular pleasure and request of late had the keeping and guiding of the ladies, daughters of King Edward IV., and also of the young lords the Duke of Buckingham, the *Earls of Warwick* and of Westmoreland, to her great charges, for the which our right trusty servant Master William Smith . . . hath paid and delivered unto our said mother the sum of £200 . . . ." But the question is, where was the Countess of Richmond herself residing? Almost certainly at the Tower, where apartments would be assigned her for the custody of these children.

Lambert Simnel would hardly have ventured to personate the young Earl in 1487, had he then been at liberty; nor would earlier reports of his secret murder have gained credence. It was to confute these and to confound Simnel, that the King commanded "on a Sunday evening Edward, the young Earl of Warwick, to be *brought from the Tower* through the most public and usual streets of London to the Cathedral Church of St. Paul; this young gentleman (as he was commanded) showing himself openly to everybody in the procession time," having communication, "especially

* Hall, p. 422.

with them that were suspected and thought to have been partakers in the commotion against the King, 'that they might perceive the fond Irishman for a vain shadow and untrue fiction." * It is certain that he was a prisoner in the Tower in 1499, when Perkin Warbeck was consigned to that fortress, and that the two youths concerted a plan for their escape. Base, however, as was Henry VII.'s treatment of the Earl, he was not condemned to death, as some writers have affirmed, for no other offence than this natural longing for life and liberty. Such ferocity was foreign to Henry's character. But, with no less criminality, he yielded to the ruthless demand of Ferdinand and Isabella for Edward's blood. Henry's son, Arthur, was affianced to their daughter Catherine, and they would have no living claimant to endanger Catherine's prospective throne.† In very wantonness of cruelty this crime exceeds any of which Richard III. has been proved guilty. If we ask, why does history palliate the one and exaggerate the other, the answer is, that in all ages the generality of men are blind worshippers of success.

On the testimony of his enemies, we know that Richard III. practised a profuse liberality towards those who had served himself or the State. A single incident will serve to mark the contrast afforded by the grasping character of Henry VII. To no man was he under greater obligations than to the Earl of

* Hall, p. 432.

† Green's "History of the English People," vol. ii., p. 77. See also Letter of De Puebla to Ferdinand. "Letters, etc., illustrating the Reign of Richard III.," by James Gairdner, p. 113, *note*. "The fame after his death sprang abroad that Ferdinand, King of Spain, would not make full conclusion of the matrimony to be had between Prince Arthur and the Lady Katherine, his daughter, as long as Edward lived."—HALL, p. 491.

Oxford. On visiting him, Henry found two long lines of liveried retainers drawn up to receive him. In doing honour to his Sovereign, Oxford had doubtless violated the law, Henry having enforced the ordinance of Richard III. prohibiting the wearing of liveries. "I thank you for your good cheer, my lord," said Henry, as he took leave of his generous host, "but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight. My attorney will speak with you." The Earl was glad to escape with a fine of £10,000, equivalent to £40,000 at the present day.*

It would be easy to multiply points of contrast between Richard and Henry, to the advantage of the former. Of more importance is it, however, that we bear in mind that whilst we have no authentic evidence of those crimes which have been laid to Richard's charge by Lancastrian historians, "the vices and injustice of Henry are, though palliated, avowed by the concurrent testimony of his panegyrists." †

The long winter of a nation's discontent did not end with the battle which overthrew the martial government of the Plantagenets. The old order indeed was changing, giving place to new; but the process was gradual and independent of dynasties. Civil discords and factions did not at once die out, as the result of Henry Tudor's marriage with the Princess who represented the long line of the Plantagenets. Nor were they harmonised by the report of the Commission of Antiquaries, instituted by Henry to trace his pedigree, and establish a claim to the crown stronger than that derived from marriage, parliament, or conquest. Not content with

* "Green's "History of the English People," ii., 70.
† Horace Walpole.

tracing back a fabulous descent through some fifty generations to the famous Belin, who lived seventy years before Christ, forty generations further brought them to King Lear. But lest this should fail to satisfy the vain-glorious King, his pedigree was yet further traced back to Brutus, "fondly supposed the first inhabitant of this island." * Surely it is no marvel that the claim to "divine right" came in with the Tudors! It is rather matter for surprise that the Commission of Antiquaries did not emulate the Frenchman who, in tracing the lineage of the house of Clermont-Tonnere, discovered that their progenitor arrested Noah's Ark for an hour in order to put the proofs of his pedigree safely on board.

One word remains to be said of Cardinal Bourchier, who has occupied a prominent place in this history. The tidings of the Battle of Bosworth Field reached him in his retirement at Knowle. For the third time, and now at the age of eighty-two, he was summoned to officiate at a coronation and a royal marriage. "The last official act of Archbishop Bourchier's trembling hand, trembling from joy as well as from age, was, as old Fuller expresses it, 'to hold the posie on which the white rose and the red were tied together.'" † This was on the 18th of January, 1486. Within three months, in his own much-loved home at Knowle, wearied with the burden and the battle of life, and deprived of its sweetest solace, but at peace with God, the Archbishop died. He was neither a great divine nor a great statesman. Yet, for half a century, he was busily engaged in ecclesiastical and State affairs, and to the advantage of both Church and State. In times when party

* Hutton, p. 156.

† Hook's "Archbishops," vol. v., p. 384.

feeling was intensely stirred he consistently acted upon the apostolic injunction: "Let your moderation be known unto all men." His *predecessor* in the See of Canterbury converted his residence into a castle of defence, arming his household with crossbows and swords. His *successor* kept a fool for the entertainment of his guests. Bourchier had no need either of sword or fool. He had no enemies even amongst political opponents; nor had he any sympathy with the frivolities common amongst men condemned by celibacy to forswear domestic joys. His delight was in books and the society of the learned; but his distinguishing characteristic, in public as in social life, was that of the peacemaker.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the preceding chapters we have considered Richard primarily as the warrior, the statesman, and the King. It remains for us to gather into a brief compass some traits of personal character, which may add completeness and accuracy to our conception of the MAN.

The character of Richard III. has been an enigma to the most painstaking and conscientious historians. As the organ of vision is subject to illusions which require for their removal the co-operate action of the brain, so the "fierce light" which proverbially "beats upon a throne," reveals or obscures the real character of its occupant, according to the purity of the medium in which it operates. Few will deny that the atmosphere which, for four centuries, has enveloped the historical Richard, has been rendered impenitrable to the light of truth, by the mists of prejudice and casuistry.

In the chroniclers who were contemporary with Richard III. and Henry VII., we expect to find contradiction and confusion; but it is important to bear in mind that, with the single exception of the continuator of the "Croyland Chronicle," and the writer of the MS. known as the

"Fleetwood Chronicle," all are notoriously infected with Lancastrian prejudices. From such sources, rather than from the scanty but authentic materials of history, preserved in the Public Record Office and other accessible manuscript collections, the traditional conception of the character of Richard III. has been derived; whilst the genius of our great dramatist, who turns to account the dark hint and half-breathed suspicion born of political hatred, has lent to that conception the force of truth. His perverted facts, says Sir Walter Scott, "and a certain knack in embodying them, has turned history upside down, or rather inside out."

There is in most minds a predisposition to accept disparaging stories, especially in reference to illustrious individuals, when they give a plausible completeness to a character, whose complexity otherwise presents problems demanding patient and discriminating scrutiny. Such an individual was Richard III. And there are few characters in history around which so many disparaging stories group themselves. They constitute the framework, studied with a thousand details, of a character that is purely ideal, in reference to which it becomes almost impossible to form a new set of associations, when the cold distance of four centuries favours a just estimate by throwing events into a truer perspective.

In attempting to disintegrate, from the mass of legendary lumber, an approximately accurate conception of the historical Richard, the truth should be steadily borne in mind that "the slanders of disparagement are as truly legends as the wonder-tales of saints and warriors." Equally so are the fulsome flatteries of courtiers, and the panegyrics of sycophants like

Rous, who has left two portraitures of Richard III., the one presenting him as a model Prince and a virtuous man, the idol of his subjects, the other as a physical and moral monster; the former written to ingratiate himself with Richard, the latter to conciliate Henry.

Justice demands that the character of every conspicuous actor in the drama of history should be judged from the information which modern scholarly research has rendered available. Discarding then all that is purely legendary, let us take the surer, if narrower, ground of authenticated facts, and deduce from these our estimate of the character which they reveal. And we must bring under our survey the whole of the life we have made our study, steadfastly refusing to fasten upon particular acts which, regarded by themselves, may merit all the censure they have evoked. For even these, when we can clearly trace the temptations out of which they sprung, should be viewed with retrospective indulgence. But, in an attempt to estimate the whole character of a man, separated from us by four centuries, it would be manifestly unjust either to judge isolated actions by the moral maxims of a later age, or to ignore the circumstances which may have made them less evil in the intentions of their author than, beyond all question, some of them are in themselves.

The first thought suggested by a comprehensive survey of Richard's life is the remarkable illustration it affords of the triumph of pure intellect over the most formidable obstacles. If we credit the stories of his physical deformity and repulsive aspect, the triumph of mind is proportionately enhanced.

This force of intellect reveals itself in well-nigh every incident of Richard's life. We see it in the ascendency which

he early acquired over those around him, and in the faculty he possessed of penetrating the workings of the human heart; we see it in the political ability as well as military prowess displayed when a mere boy; in his sagacious and successful administration of the Northern Marches; in his dictation of terms of peace in the Scottish capital; and, again, in the suddenness and completeness of his overthrow of the Woodvilles, and the calm self-possession with which he assumed supreme power in the State. It was displayed in his determined efforts to abridge the power of the nobles, and yet more conspicuously in his contempt for a policy of mere expediency, such as dictated the disgraceful peace with France in 1475, and in calmness amid political convulsions. In his private life it is equally manifest—as in his reconcilation with his brother's widow, and in the complete ascendency he acquired over her will and affections, at a time when she believed him guilty of her children's blood. But perhaps the illustration which will first suggest itself to many minds is his marriage with Anne Neville, in spite of the powerful opposition of his brother, the Duke of Clarence, and whilst labouring under suspicion of being the recent murderer of her affianced husband, Prince Edward, and of the King his father. The powerful scene in which Shakspeare has described his successful wooing, unveracious though it is, does not in the least degree exaggerate the difficulties which Richard surmounted by the sheer force of intellect. The strongest passions by which humanity is swayed were enlisted against him. That Anne believed him guilty of a double murder is almost certain. She may well have doubted the sincerity of his professed devotion to herself, and, if she had inclined to

believe it unfeigned, natural feeling would only have intensified her repugnance to her royal wooer.

Richard's detractors seem to have assumed that the tender feelings of a lover could never enter the heart of such an one as they have portrayed. But, as Hutton observes, "Richard's disposition was in every respect like that of other men, two qualities excepted—bravery and ambition." His attachment to Anne Neville was probably first contracted in very early life. But two years her senior, he was thrown into her society when, committed to the charge of the Earl of Warwick, he resided for a time at Middleham Castle. The great Earl had destined his daughter to be the bride of Edward, Prince of Wales. Could we credit the fable that Richard was himself the murderer of the Prince, jealousy might be assumed as the motive. But the crime and the motive are alike incredible. That he still cherished the hope of his boyhood is likely enough, and it is probable that mutual memories of Middleham contributed to his success. Ambition, doubtless, was the loadstar of his affections; but his whole after life testified to the sincerity of his attachment to the Queen, whom he won in spite of obstacles so tremendous.

Again, the obstacles to the seizure of regal power were such as must have daunted the most daring ambition unallied with intellectual power of the highest order. "There is not," says Hutton, "in the whole history of the English Kings a similar instance of a prince forming a design upon the crown, laying so able and so deep a scheme, in which were so many obstacles; surmounting them all, and gaining the beloved object in eight weeks!" The powerful influence of the Woodvilles, who had the young King in their possession, must

first be neutralised. Such true and powerful friends of Edward's family as Stanley, Hastings, and Morton must be got out of the way. The people, whose sympathies were stirred, must be reassured and brought over to his assistance. Powerful as was the aid he had received from Buckingham, who had now become a formidable rival, he too must be flattered, duped, and got rid of. The young Princes must be got into his power, and their outraged mother mollified. All this, and much besides, was possible only because Richard was immeasurably superior to all in force of character. "A bolder display of masterful talents is nowhere to be met with." Without multiplying illustrations of a fact which is undisputed, it may be said that the subtlety of mind displayed by Richard III., and the triumph of pure intellect over opposing forces of the most varied, formidable, and complex nature establish his claim, intellectually at all events, to be regarded as the greatest of the Plantagenets.

The question which now confronts us is, whether Richard's great intellectual gifts were prostituted to ignoble ends, the attainment of which involved the perpetration of diabolical crimes? That he aspired to the crown, even during his brother's lifetime, need not here be denied; that Rivers, Grey, and Hastings were the victims of that ambition must be allowed. We are further asked to believe that, in pursuit of the same end, he was accessory to the death of Prince Edward, the Duke of Clarence, Edward IV., his two sons, Henry VI., and Queen Anne, and the perpetrator of innumerable lesser crimes of a revolting nature. Three families—Henry VI., the Duke of Clarence, and the children of the reigning Sovereign—stood between Richard and the crown. But we have it on high authority that time brings everything to the man who

waits. We have already examined in sufficient detail the charges of wholesale murder, in the prosecution of his ambitious design, with which Richard has been assailed. Of all those authorities to whom appeal is habitually made as implicating him in these diabolical crimes, not one brings any definite or authenticated charge against him. They report, with inconsistent details, prevalent suspicions which one and all refuse to endorse.

Richard's master-passion was ambition.

> Within his breast, as in a palace, lay
> Wakeful ambition, leagued with lusty pride.

It could hardly have been otherwise. The pride, the unbending spirit, the ambition of the mother, the ambition and subtlety of the father, lived again in the son. Early imbued as he had been with sentiments of religion and morality, and especially with a reverence for the domestic affections, these were all overshadowed by that fatal ambition which the Duchess of York infused into the infant minds of her children. Thus cradled by ambition, Richard, though the eighth child and youngest son of a father who had fallen a victim to the lust for sovereignty, was nurtured in the belief that a crown was the sole object worthy of his pursuit. No price was too great to pay for its possession. He was well qualified to rule, and he knew it. He stood near the crown, whose dazzling lustre corrupted his moral sense. He resolved to wear the crown; and he never went back from a resolution deliberately formed.

> And yet between my soul's desire and me
> Is Clarence, Henry, and his son, young Edward,
> And all the unlooked-for issue of their bodies,
> To take their rooms ere I can place myself:
> A cold premeditation for my purpose!

Why, then, I do but dream of sovereignty,
Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore, where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying he'll lade it dry to have his way:
So do I wish the crown, being so far off;
And so I chide the means that keep me from it,
And so I say I'll cut the causes off,
Flattering me with impossibilities.
* * * * *
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murd'rous Machiavel to school:
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut! were it further off I'll pluck it down.

It was not in Richard's character to weigh contingencies, nor to vindicate his purposes. Justifications he relegated to the future, and he refused to allow them to darken the short, decisive argument by which it was his wont to settle, once and for ever, questions of policy and conduct. Herein lies the explanation of his conduct towards his brother Clarence. He stood between him and the throne; his rebellion furnished the opportunity of securing his birthright, and, though innocent of his death, Richard cannot be absolved from at least a constructive responsibility for his attainder. By submission to the Queen-mother he would have made enemies of all the old nobility, and plunged the country into the horrors of civil war. The same consequences must have followed a premature attempt to snatch the crown from the brows of his helpless and effeminate nephew. His genius discerned and his force of character enabled him to pursue a middle course, which rallied to his support some of the most powerful friends of the young King, and all to whom the fate of the empire was dearer than that of a family. His sagacity, self-posses-

sion, and firmness of purpose achieved a victory over powerful and determined adversaries. And this was accomplished, as the Croyland chronicler reminds us, "without any slaughter, or the shedding of as much blood as would issue from a cut finger."

We know the painful story of the young Princes. The mystery of their disappearance will never be solved; still less will the crime of their murder be brought home to Richard. Motives to the perpetration of the crime were powerful enough to justify suspicion; evidence that he yielded to the temptation there is none. Unhappily the tragic death of Hastings confronts us with indubitable evidence that, in the pursuit of his insatiable ambition, Richard was not incapable of deeds of blood. But even this crime was not inconsistent with a true patriotism. Believing himself to be the saviour of his country, he necessarily regarded the man who stood in his way as an enemy of his country, and it is certain that the public voice condoned a crime which prevented the horrors of civil war.

By his own genius and energy Richard carved his way through the most formidable obstacles to the heights to which his ambition pointed. His choice had been rather to rule, hated, than to serve — the idol only of fellow subjects. "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." The real test of *character* lies in the answer to the question—How did he use that great position; was it prostituted to selfish and personal ends, or did he seek to reconcile the hatreds of faction, to remedy abuses, and to govern for the benefit of the nation?

The reign of Richard III. was too brief and troubled to

allow of any great achievements in the way of reform, whether social, administrative, or political. Yet we are not wholly without means of estimating the bent of his genius, and his individual exertions in the details of State administration, and thus of discovering the grounds upon which the majority of his subjects regarded him as a wise and valiant Prince, to whose hands the honour of their country might be safely entrusted. In the first place, the fact that he twice summoned a meeting of Parliament is evidence, which cannot be got rid of, of his respect for constitutional forms of government. It may be said that on both occasions his main purpose was to bolster up his imperfect title to the crown, and to secure the succession to his son. But even so, the fact that he sought a parliamentary title was a distinct recognition of the delegated authority which he wielded. It was a reversal of the policy of Edward IV., and an evidence of the sincerity of his repeated avowal that he desired to reign in the hearts of his subjects. The figment of Divine Right was not yet invented; the principle of hereditary succession, although recognised, was not legalised; and although the right of inheritance was admitted, the question from whom it was derived, which had been the cause of much violence and anarchy, was now for the first time definitely settled.

A complacent Parliament was an engine of great power which Richard might have employed, as his predecessor had done, for oppressive taxation. He had been opposed to the conclusion of peace with France in 1475, when Edward's army returned home "with the loss of reputation but not of blood." "We have gained nothing," he then exclaimed, "for all our labour and expense but shame." It was now in his

power to renew that war, for which he had a valid pretext in the shelter afforded to the Earl of Richmond. But Richard, consistently with his declaration that he desired the goodwill of his subjects, bowed to the universal and even violent desire for peace. In his administration he maintained that character for moderation and probity, which he had acquired in the administration of the Marches, where he had so successfully conciliated the affections of the inhabitants. "His credit," says Hutton, "rose to that elevation and shone with that splendour as not to set for many years after his death."

His sagacity and foresight were remarkably displayed in his grasp of the tendencies of his age, which he courageously embodied in his administration. The growing interests of English commerce were carefully fostered; malpractices such as, in our day, are lugubriously discussed in the newspapers, and, in consequence, extend their ramifications, were suppressed under heavy penalties, whilst special privileges were granted, as Polydore Vergil tells us, to those trades which were beneficial and profitable to the kingdom. The administration of the law was purified, especially in relieving juries from that intimidation which had brought them into universal contempt. Through his instrumentality the last vestige of villanage disappeared in England, by his manumission of the bondmen who survived only on the royal domains. And last, but not least, to Richard belongs, as we have seen, the credit of being the first English Sovereign who encouraged literature. He extended to Caxton both friendship and patronage, and spared no pains to secure the success of his invention, which was destined to transmit his own memory to the hatred of posterity.

Not less noteworthy than Richard's respect for Parliament was his impartiality in the selection of ministers, and his deference to their advice. He did nothing of importance without consultation with his Council, and Sir Thomas More admits that it was his habit, after stating his own views, to add: "My lords, this is my mind; if any of you know what may else be better, I shall be ready to change it, for I am not wedded to my own will."

Without going into further detail, it may be said that Richard's tyranny was of a passingly mild type; that he used the power he had unscrupulously seized, to advance the real interests of his subjects and the power of the realm; and that the formula, which would most accurately embody the principles of his administration, may be expressed in the familiar triverbial—Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.

We revert once more to the personal character of the man, as distinguished from the Sovereign. We have spoken of his intellectual power and of his ambition. Does a dispassionate review of his whole career reveal the existence of those finer qualities which we recognise as virtues? That Richard could appreciate such qualities in others, and that he desired, generally, the good estate of the Catholic Church, is shown incidentally in the fact that the clergy, whom he had done much to alienate, addressed him in language of confidence and admiration. This at least assures us that the men who were best able to form a correct judgment, credited him with a zeal for religion. That Richard was sensible of religious obligations is abundantly evident. It is easy to say that he only shared the religious feeling of the age, that good acts may atone for bad ones, and thus to discover evidence of his

alleged crimes in his very acts of charity. But the religious feeling of his age did not demand from the individual purity of life, generosity, and filial affection. If these virtues are found side by side with the more splendid acts of charity, both may reasonably be assigned to a genuine religious sentiment.

It is not easy to distinguish between the religious man and the hypocrite.

> Nor neither man nor angel can discern
> Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
> Invisible, except to God alone.

But it may at least be said that Richard had a strong tincture of religion, and was a careful observer of its forms. That he had been guilty of "commonplace deviations from morality" cannot be questioned. It is equally certain that the scathing words of his proclamations against Buckingham and the Earl of Richmond, with their followers, expressed his real detestation and contempt of their immoral lives, which he describes as tending to "the maintenance of vices and sin as they had done in times past, to the great displeasure of God, and evil example of all Christian people."

In all this there was doubtless a shrewd attempt to turn the vices of his enemies to his own account. We shall do well, however, to bear in mind that such utterances were in full agreement with his Circular Letter to the Bishops for restraining vice; and this, at all events, was the spontaneous expression of a mind shocked by the abominations, which even Morton admitted to be prevalent amongst the clergy. But the test of the truly religious spirit is not in the outward observances of religion, nor in the use of conventional

commonplaces in official documents. Where it exists it will permeate the life and reveal itself in conduct. *Generosity* is esteemed a Christian virtue. It was eminently characteristic of Richard. His foundation and endowment of religious establishments has been assigned to a desire both to atone for crimes, and to appear religious in the eyes of men. The allegation is plausible. But Richard's generosity was not exclusively upon a munificent scale which commanded the observation of the world. The founder of the colleges of Middleham and York, could also find time and inclination to restore to the priory at Pontefract a paltry twenty acres of land which had been filched from the Church, prompted, as he himself says, by "calling to remembrance the dreadful sentence of the Church of God given against all those persons who wilfully attempt to usurp unto themselves, against good conscience, possessions or other things of right belonging to God and His said Church, and the great peril of soul which may ensue by the same." The dispenser of great lordships and vast estates to men, whose loyalty was worth purchasing at a heavy price, could also busy himself in checking corruption, and rewarding merit in the petty offices of the Civil Service, and in dispensing alms to the unfortunate and the deserving. Two instances of the latter, which could only spring from generosity and a sense of justice, are recorded in the Harleian MSS. A bricklayer of Twickenham, named Edward Philpot, "who before kept after his degree a good household whereby many poor were refreshed,"* and a yeoman of Nottinghamshire, had both suffered the loss of their goods and tenements

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 148 b.

by fire, "to their utter undoing," the latter whilst on the King's service in Scotland. In each case Richard granted "a protection for requiring of alms;" a means of recovering their fortunes incongruous with modern ideas, but in harmony with those of the fifteenth century.* It would be easy to multiply illustrations of his generosity. In the register of his grants we meet with annuities to all classes, from £2,000 to twenty shillings, from earls to anchoresses. Gifts of manor lands, offices, money, exemptions from taxation, remission of fines, and revocations of outlawry are innumerable.

But Richard's generosity was yet more significantly displayed towards those who were undoubtedly his enemies. To the family of Hastings it may reasonably be urged that he owed such reparation as it was in his power to make. At least he was true to his promise to the unfortunate widow who, by a covenant given at Reading on the 23rd July, 1483, he bound himself to protect, and to secure her and her children in all their rights and possessions, granting her the wardship of her son and heir, and the keeping of his castle and lordships, forbidding any to do them wrong, "but to assist them upon all occasions." † He was under no such obligation to Buckingham, the arch-traitor and fomenter of his fatal ambition. Yet he not only paid the Duke's debts but was equally careful of the traitor's widow, to whom he granted

* The licence to ask alms was very jealously guarded. The persons so licensed were required to write their names "in a bill or roll indented, the one part thereof to remain with them self, and the other part by them to be certified before a Justice of the Peace," who should deliver to such person a letter which, however, would only authorise him to beg within certain limits. He went beyond these on pain of imprisonment.—*Statutes from MC. to* 1557, p. 524.

† Harl. MSS., 433, fols. 108, 116.

an annuity of 200 marks out of the lordship of Tunbridge.* Still less did he owe consideration to the Earl of Oxford, upon whose military genius his rival leaned. Yet we find the Countess of Oxford a pensioner upon his bounty to the extent of £100 a year. He ordered the payment to Lady Rivers of all the rents of the estates which had been settled upon her, notwithstanding the sequestration of those estates. Amongst many other annuities which are inconsistent with the malicious, envious, and brutal nature attributed to him, is one securing to a widow the arrears of a pension granted by Edward IV. The Cheneys, one of whom he unhorsed and disabled on Bosworth Field, were old and inveterate foes to him and to his house. Yet we find him issuing a safeguard for Florence, wife of Alexander Cheney, "whom for her good and virtuous disposition the King hath taken into his protection and granted to her the custody of her husband's lands, though being of late confederated with certain rebels and traitors he had intended and compassed the utter destruction of his person and the subversion of this realm."† His contemptuous but humane treatment of Jane Shore; his justification of the confidence reposed in him by the unfortunate Earl Rivers, who entrusted him with the execution of his will, are facts which admit of indefinite amplification, illustrative of a generosity of disposition which has been insufficiently recognised. Their significance can only be rightly estimated when we contrast them with the selfishness, the barbarity, the reckless indifference to life, liberty, and property which universally prevailed.

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* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 172 b.

† *Ibid.*, 433, fol. 126 b.

The suggestion of filial affection as a trait in the character of Richard III. will probably appear to many an idle paradox, so completely is our judgment warped by the appeal which Shakspeare has made to our imagination. Who is not familiar with the portrait which he has drawn of the Dowager Duchess of York casting off her unnatural son, in violation of Nature's strongest law? But it is no disparagement of that splendid genius, which it is an impertinence to extol, to say that Shakspeare must not be consulted for history. A letter addressed by Richard to his mother, in June, 1484, has fortunately been preserved. Without claiming, as some have done, indications of "deep Christian humility," in the terms of filial respect and consideration which mark every sentence of this letter, the evidence it affords of the relations subsisting between the King and his mother is valuable, in view of the calumnious statements of his detractors, for which not a particle of evidence exists. The occasion of the letter was the necessity for superseding Collyngbourne, in the offices which he held in the service of the Duchess of York, on the discovery of his treasonable correspondence with the Earl of Richmond.

"MADAM,

"I recommend me to you as heartily as is to me possible. Beseeching you in my most humble and effectuous wise of your daily blessing, to my singular comfort and defence in my need. And, madam, I heartily beseech you that I may often hear from you to my comfort. And such news as be here my servant Thomas Bryan, this bearer, shall show you; to whom please it you to give credence unto. And, madam, I beseech you to be good and gracious lady to

my lord my Chamberlain, to be your officer in Wiltshire in such as Colyngbourne had. I trust he shall therein do you service. And that it please you that by this bearer I may understand your pleasure in this behalf. And I pray God to send you the accomplishment of your noble desires. Written at Pountfreit, the 3rd day of June, with the hand of your most humble son,

"RICHARD REX." *

The filial tone of this letter cannot be explained away by the plea that the terms employed are conventional and "prescribed by custom." The first two sentences would have amply met all such demands. All that follows may fairly be taken to express the natural feelings of true filial attachment. A son who had dishonoured his mother, as Richard was alleged to have done, would be little likely to trouble himself with a punctilious regard to conventional requirements. For such an one, it would have sufficed to make his will known by a messenger charged to enforce it. But, without the evidence afforded by this letter, the domestic virtues which no one denies to Richard, would warrant the assumption of his filial piety. A tender and affectionate father, a sympathetic husband, a considerate and generous master, an over-trustful friend, and the chivalrous protector of women, even when enemies, could not be the unnatural son which his enemies have depicted him.

Nor was it only in the purity of his life, his generosity, and domestic virtues that Richard exemplified the religious spirit—his enemies themselves being witness. Notwithstand-

* Ellis, "Original Letters," 2nd Series, vol. i., p. 161.

ing the favour which he showed to ecclesiastics, he had made himself many enemies amongst the clergy by the sequestration of the property of the Church. Yet even Innocent VIII recognised his desire to promote religion, and inferentially his own religious character. According to the ideas of his age, no better proof of this could be afforded than a punctilious observance of the Church festivals. How religiously Richard performed this duty is matter of history. At the most critical moment of his life he delayed his march from Nottingham twenty-four pregnant hours, from fear of offending the Virgin by marching on the Feast of her Assumption. *We* call this superstition; but had we lived in Richard's day it would have been otherwise esteemed. Nay, is it not so to-day by multitudes whose intelligence and piety we respect?

Another test of a religious character in any age is a man's sensitiveness of conscience. Richard's life had been stained by heinous crimes, and by none more revolting than the execution of Rivers, Gray, and Hastings. Yet, if we would judge him impartially, we must again recall the temper and manners of the age in which he lived. During the Wars of the Roses no forms of trial had been observed, and, for revolting cruelty, the execution of the Duke of Somerset by Edward IV., and of the Earl of Warwick by Henry VII., cast into the shade every crime of which Richard can be held guilty. "His," says Horace Walpole, "were more the crimes of the age than of the man, and except those executions of Rivers, Gray, and Hastings, I defy anybody to prove one other of those charged to his account, from any good authority." How, then, did Richard view these deeds of shame which have left an indelible stain upon his memory?

In circumstances when, if ever, a man would speak sincerely —on the last morning of his life, when his kingdom *and* his life were staked upon the issue of a single battle, the contending hosts in which were already facing each other on Bosworth Field—he uttered these significant words: "Although in the obtaining of the garland (the crown) I, being seduced by sinister counsel and diabolical temptation, did commit a wicked and detestable act, yet I have with strict penance and salt tears, as I trust expiated and clearly purged the same offence; which abominable crime I desire you, of friendship, as clearly to forget as I daily do remember and lament the same." Such words require no comment. They are words not simply of remorse, but of penitence forced from the heart of a man, to whom it is impossible to deny the religious spirit.

If Richard III. was not a model Prince nor an exemplary man, still less was he the unmitigated tyrant, the physical monster, or the moral reprobate depicted by historians. Possessed of great intellectual power, he could not accept a position in the State inferior to that of the intellectual pigmies who stood between him and the throne. That he failed to distinguish between motives of patriotism and self-aggrandisement must be allowed. *L'État c'est moi* might have been his maxim; and, in the pursuit of the principle which it involves, be doubtless believed that he was swayed by patriotism alone, and that *his* objects were inseparable from the objects of the country. He stood too near the throne to allow an admitted defect of title, or considerations of pure justice, to deter him from grasping the prize, and possessing himself of power which should admit of the exercise of his great intellectual

gifts as the director of his country's destinies. Such ambition is a quality near akin to virtue. Unhappily, Richard tarnished an ambition, in itself not ignoble, by crimes which admit of no palliation. In judging these, however, we must still resolutely bear in mind the weltering era of trouble and confusion, of anarchy, hatred, and rapine in which he lived. The words addressed to the corporal by "Uncle Toby" may, with a single exception, be applied to the crimes that can be substantiated against Richard—"Thou didst very right, Trim, as a soldier, but very wrong as a man." We cannot judge of temptations from which he could not emancipate himself—those "diabolical temptations" the yielding to which had cost him "strict penance and salt tears." But when he had won the crown, he wore it as became a prince.

He had many faults, but his position was one of unexampled difficulty. It was only when experience had taught him that he could trust none of his friends; when some had proved traitors and others trimmers, that his loneliness begot in him a cynical contempt of men. Then, indeed, he became suspicious, cold-blooded, and vindictive. But he never lost the power of self-control. That intellectual greatness which assured him of his ability to accomplish the task he had taken upon himself, preserved him from the vacillation which ever waits on weakness, and, alone amongst the Plantagenet Kings, he was never in danger of becoming the sport of those Court factions which he was unable to reconcile—save by his death.

History and the drama have dubbed Richard a tyrant; but the exercise of legal power is not tyranny. It was the vigorous *impartiality* with which he administered justice, and not the abuse of power that gave offence. His public acts

proclaim him a wise and sagacious constitutional ruler, doing his best to stimulate and develop whatever capacity existed for public and political life. He broke through the practice of former sovereigns of imposing their personal views upon the Council, which he endowed with a real responsibility. Under Edward IV. the duty of the House of Commons had been confined to the voting of supplies. Richard made them feel the energy of his own intellect; and although the day was yet distant when they should become the first power in the State, under the Crown, their legislative functions were recognised and stimulated, and never after fell into entire decay. Jealous of the honour, the greatness, and the prosperity of the nation, we see him developing her commerce, encouraging literature, purifying the administration of justice, abolishing the last remnant of serfdom, remedying abuses, rewarding merit, and aspiring to rule in the hearts of his subjects. Through the haze of prejudice and misrepresentation, which ever wait on failure, we may yet discover in his character traces of virtues rare in his age, and not too common in our own. His courage was unsurpassed; he held in honest contempt and abhorrence the voluptuousness of the times; his sternness—which if sometimes, under overpowering temptation, deflected from virtue, was far oftener a terror to evil-doers—set in strong relief the natural generosity of his disposition, experienced alike by friends and foes; his domestic life was irreproachable, and his regard for religion sincere. Yet, says one who knew his virtues, "neither can his blood redeem him from injurious tongues, nor the reproachful indignity offered to his body." *

* The Cornwallis MS., p. 14.

The estimate which is here presented of the character of Richard III. differs widely from that which has been assigned to him by Tudor historians, and which Shakspeare has enshrined in our memories by his consummate art. It is only less divergent from that which has been formed by modern historians, who have treated his errors with unmeasured reprobation. With regard to the former, we know the poisoned sources whence Skakspeare drew his "history;" and if we would form an unbiassed judgment of the trustworthiness of those Tudor chroniclers, upon whom modern historians have too much relied, we should do well to collate their later writings with such as were penned whilst yet the star of York was in the ascendant. Rous transcends them all in his determined and too successful efforts to send Richard down to posterity as a physical and moral monster. His inconsistency has been already noticed. Writing during Richard's lifetime, in the Warwick Roll—now in the possession of the Duke of Manchester, which fortunately passed out of his hands, and was not mutilated as was the copy now preserved in the College of Arms, in London—he thus eulogises him:

"The most mighty Prince Richard by the grace of God King of England and of France, and lord of Ireland, by very matrimony, without discontinuance or any defiling in the law, by heir male lineally descending from King Harry the Second, all avarice set aside, ruled his subjects in his realm full commendably, punishing offenders of his laws, specially extortioners and oppressors of his commons, and cherishing those that were virtuous; by the which discreet guiding he got great thanks of God and love of all his subjects, rich and

poor, and great laud of the people of all other lands about him." *

This is the language of the obsequious courtesan, and the priestly antiquary of Gay's Cliff stands convicted a perjured worshipper of success. Had Richard won the battle of Bosworth Field, we here see how all his real crimes would have been gilded over, his virtues exaggerated, and, instead of the *infelix maribus* of Anne Neville, a portrait of an immaculate King and an exemplary man handed down to posterity. Posterity, perhaps, would not have been deceived; but Shakspeare's immortal drama would not have been written.

Adulation of the living is open to the suspicion of corrupt motives; it can win nothing from the dead, and in the early days of Henry VII. it was perilous to employ it in reference to the King whom he had supplanted. This consideration lends a significance which it would be difficult to exaggerate to an entry in the register of the city of York, dated the day after the battle of Bosworth Field. It runs thus:

"It was shewn by divers persons, especially by John Spon, sent unto the Field of Redmore (Bosworth) to bring tidings from the same to the city, that King Richard, late lawfully reigning over us, was, through great treason . . . piteously slain and murdered, to the great heaviness of this city." †

This is the testimony of men to whom Richard III. was better known than to any other of his subjects. It is a tribute of undoubted sincerity to his personal and kingly worth. Equally valuable is the testimony of a contemporary

* "The Rows Roll," published by the late Mr. Pickering, section 63.

† Drake's "Eboracum," p. 120.

writer whom I have frequently quoted, and whose remarkable manuscript has been hitherto overlooked. The King omitted nothing he says, "that in wisdom or true policy might . . . establish peace or good laws in this kingdom. His edicts are extant; what can be found in them not becoming a king, what not befitting his religious worship of God and service of his country? He was no hater of the people, no oppressor of the Commons, no suppressor of his subjects to satisfy either licentious humours or to reward flatterers." In spite of all, he continues, Richard "is condemned. And by whom? By those for whom he laboured . . . Yet neither his laws nor his actions, though the one be allowed, the other not disallowed even by his enemies, are sufficient to plead or to make proof of his innocency, but that malicious credulity rather embraceth the partial writings of an indiscrete Chronicler, a favourer of the Lancastrian family." *

There is, then, less presumption than might at first seem apparent, in the formation of an estimate of the character of Richard III. at variance with that which has been handed down by the writers of the last decade of the fifteenth century. This testimony must be wholly set aside as malicious, perjured, and basely obsequious. And the time has gone by when the historical student has any excuse for treating them as other than malicious story-tellers. Thanks to the prolific labours of Mr. James Gairdner, those recondite sources of history, which have for centuries been buried in the Public Record Office, are now available to all. In the "Letters and Papers Illustrating the Reigns of Richard III. and Henry VII.," there

* Cornewaleys MS. in the Duke of Devonshire's Collection, pp. 6, 7.

are curious and valuable details for the reconstruction of the history of that period. Through them, he says, "better than through any other medium we may trace the mental portraits both of Richard and Henry. We see their hopes and fears, their ways of meeting danger, their demeanour towards their subjects, and towards other kings. We see also traces of the internal administration under both these sovereigns . . . and while we must always look to chronicles and histories for the events which time brought forth, it is to these records that we must turn to learn its real character." *

Whether these records will fully justify the estimate I have formed of the character of Richard III., is matter of opinion. All that I claim is to have advanced nothing that is inconsistent with them, and I believe that the portraiture I have presented, approaches nearer to the truth than the extravagant conception which Shakspeare has made familiar to us, or that of the chroniclers, by whom it has been said, "All his virtue is, by a malicious alchemy, subtracted into crime;" or, again, that of Bacon, who declares such virtues as he cannot deny, to have been "feigned and affected things to serve his ambition." Yet even his enemies are constrained to credit Richard with qualities that are inconsistent with their estimate of his character. They agree in representing him as a high-spirited youth "whom all praised." Grafton, a servile flatterer of Henry VII., speaks of "those good abilities, whereof he hath already right many, little needing my praise." His generosity is repeatedly noticed by More, who says, "With *large gifts* he got him

* "Letters and Papers of Richard III.," p. 9.

unsteadfast friendships;" and, again, "Free was he to dispense, and somewhat above his power *liberal.*" Bacon describes him as "a prince of military virtue, approved jealous of the honour of the English nation." He even calls him *noble.* "Although desire of rule did blind him, yet, in his other actions, like a true Plantagenet, he was noble." The Duke of Buckingham speaks of him as "without dissimulation;" whilst his most unrelenting enemy, Morton, testifies to "his *good qualities* being fixed in his memory." * Edward IV. gratefully recorded "the gratuitous, laudable, and honourable services in many wise rendered to him by his most dear brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester." And, lastly, Parliament has inscribed upon its rolls a tribute to the "great wit, prudence, justice, princely courage, memorable and laudable acts . . . done for the salvation and defence of this realm." †

The history of Richard III. is a warning of the perils of inordinate ambition. It has been said that he "marred the subject to make a monarch." It had been well for him if the crown, which he could not lawfully claim, had been out of his reach. In grasping it he tarnished his fair fame, and found in its possession only Dead-Sea fruit, which served to obscure when it failed to annihilate his virtues. So that if we acknowledge with Hutton that "in him were united as many excellencies as would furnish several shining characters, and as many faults as would damn a troop," we are warranted in tracing his errors and his crimes to that fatal ambition which "marred the subject" rather than to moral obliquity, and hypocrisy

Striving to make his evil deeds look fair.

* Grafton, p. 147.

† "Rot. Parl.," vi., p. 240.

"Surely," says Sir George Buck, "if men are taken to the life best from their actions, we shall find him in the circle of a character not so commaculate and mixt as passionate and purblinde pens have dasht it, whilst we squint not at those vertues in him which make up other Princes absolute."

The fabulous tales which Shakspeare has interwoven into his splendid drama have been too long associated with the memory of Richard. Art is immortal, and claims our reverential homage. But justice is divine, uncompromising, and in the end triumphant. Art at once gratifies and stimulates the imagination. But art "is second, not the first." Justice holds the scales in which the facts of history must be ultimately weighed. Fill them as we may with weeds and lumber, Justice serenely waits, whilst her impartial handmaiden TIME works the great assortment, and men echo the old, old saying, "The first shall be last, and the last first." The character of Richard III. no longer presents the enigma which perplexed historians whilst the fabulous tales of Hall and Holinshed remained unexploded. The hand of Time has ruthlessly weeded out this rubbish from the page of history. Justice has triumphed over art, and rescued the memory of Richard III. from the unjust aspersions of perjured sycophants and credulous chroniclers.

Shall we not then render a tribute of just admiration to the last of the Plantagenets? Possessing a marvellous *power* without the *pride* of intellect, sagacity, courage, and a burning patriotism, his aim was to heal all the hurts of a distracted country. He failed, and became an object of hatred and unparalleled vituperation, for the tide of applause ever runs parallel with that of prosperity. In his private life he was a

dutiful son, a loyal and affectionate brother, a loving and considerate husband, a tender and wise father, a gracious and generous master, a pure-minded and chivalrous man. In social life his generosity was munificent; he was ever ready to forget injuries and over-trustful towards all, yet conscious of his own dignity and making that dignity respected. He had great faults, but his manifold virtues "o'ertopped them all." As the French lord observes in "All's Well that Ends Well": "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together; our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues."

APPENDIX.

A. (Vol. i., p. 29.)

The Lord John Clifford, whose history is so remarkably connected with the House of York, was killed at Ferrybridge, in the twentieth year of his age; leaving, as the inheritor of his titles and vast estates, an infant heir, Henry, afterwards tenth Lord Clifford. Having rendered himself odious to the reigning family, in consequence of his having slain the young prince, Edmund Earl of Rutland, a few months previously, the deceased Lord Clifford was attainted by Act of Parliament; and his widow (the Baroness Vesci in her own right), fearing that the Yorkists would avenge themselves on the heir of a chieftain who had incurred their bitterest enmity, fled with her child to the wildest recesses of Cumberland, and, under the garb of a shepherd boy, effectually concealed him from all knowledge of those political enemies, whose indignation would probably have sacrificed the child in retaliation for the father's crimes. After the lapse of some years the Lady Clifford espoused a second husband, Sir Launcelot Threlkald, to whom she imparted her secret; and who aided her in keeping "the shepherd lord" concealed from the Yorkist faction. For the space of twenty-four years the unconscious victim of political hatred tended his sheep, alike unconscious of his noble birth as of the maternal solicitude which watched unsuspected over the life of the mountain boy. After spending the prime of his days in perfect seclusion, amidst the fastnesses of his native county, during the reigns of Edward IV., Edward V., and Richard III., his name and title were at length made known to him; and, in the thirty-second year of his age, he was fully restored to his ancestral honours by King Henry VII.

But although bred in obscurity, and, from necessity, deprived of all education, even so much as learning to write, lest "it might make discovery of him," the lordly spirit of a noble race remained unsubdued by the lowly occupation to which he was early inured. On his restoration to "all his baronies," he placed himself under the tuition of the monks of Bolton Priory, by means of whose tuition he made rapid progress in the acquirements of the age, and with whom, at his adjoining ancestral abode, "Barden Tower," he prosecuted the favourite studies of the period. Amongst the archives of the Clifford race are yet preserved records that testify the interest he took in astronomy, alchemy, and other philosophical pursuits, and the zeal with which he devoted himself to such branches of knowledge.

Moreover, he also gave proof that the warlike genius of "the stout Lord Cliffords" had slumbered—not slept—in the person of their remarkable descendant; for at the advanced age of sixty, casting aside his peaceful studies, and exchanging the philosopher's gown for the coat of mail, he acted a conspicuous part at the battle of Flodden Field, in which contest he was one of the principal commanders. He was twice married, and was the parent of ten children. Shortly after emerging from his lowly disguise he married the cousin-german of the reigning sovereign, King Henry VII., Anne, the only daughter of Sir John St. John of Bletso; by whom he had three sons and four daughters, the eldest of whom, Henry, the eleventh Lord Clifford, succeeded to the family honours in 1523, and was speedily created Earl Clifford and Earl of Cumberland. The entire career of "the shepherd lord" forms perhaps one of the wildest tales of romance which real life ever presented. He lived under the rule of six English monarchs, viz., Henry VI., Edward IV., Edward V., Richard III., Henry VII., and Henry VIII.; and whether his eventful history is considered with reference to the vicissitudes that marked his early days, the calm dignity and true wisdom that he displayed when emerging from abject poverty to feudal power, or the chivalrous feeling he evinced when distinguishing himself at the close of life on the battle-field, admiration cannot fail to be elicited at the strong natural understanding, the innate dignity, and the extraordinarily firm and vigorous mind which in all the stirring scenes of his unparalleled career characterised the chequered life of "the Shepherd Lord."—HALSTED'S *Richard III.*, vol. i., pp. 413–15.

B. (Vol. i., p. 50.)

Amongst the gymnastic exercises required of children at a very early age, one was to ride in full career against a wooden figure holding a buckler, called a quintaine. This quintaine turned on an axis, and, as there was a wooden sword in the other hand of the supposed opponent, the young cavalier, if he did not manage the horse and weapon with address, received a blow when the shock of his charge made the quintaine spring round. Boys, more advanced in years, were taught to spring upon a horse while armed at all points; to exercise themselves in running; to strike for a length of time with the axe or club; to dance and throw somersaults, entirely armed, excepting the helmet; to mount on horseback behind one of their comrades, by barely laying hand on his sleeve; to raise themselves betwixt two partition walls to any height, by placing their back against the one and their knees and hands against the other; to mount a ladder placed against a tower upon the reverse, or untouching the rounds with their feet; to throw the javelin and to pitch the bar.—See Brayley's *Graphic Illustrator*, p. 27.

C. (Vol. i., p. 292.)

The vicissitudes of fortune were, however, generally in the opposite direction. The rapidity with which royal and noble blood may, under adverse circumstances, filter down to the lowest strata of society is strikingly exemplified in the following facts: The last male Plantagenet, Edward, Earl of Warwick, son of the Duke of Clarence, was beheaded in 1499. In him and his sister, Margaret de la Pole, who was beheaded in 1541, several royal descents converged. Margaret Pole left a daughter, Ursula, whose husband, Henry Lord Stafford, could also boast of several royal descents through both his father and mother. Their third son, Richard, was the father of two children, Roger and Jane. The latter married a joiner and had a son, who was a working cobbler at Newport, in Shropshire, in 1637, in which year her brother Roger became entitled to succeed to the Stafford barony, though compelled by Charles I. to relinquish his claim to it on account of his poverty.—See Foster's *Royal Lineage of Noble Families.*

D. (Vol. ii., p. 38.)

A MEMORIAL of a Herefordshire lady to Edward, Duke of Buckingham, setting forth her services in rescuing His Grace from destruction at the time of his father's apprehension.

"Md. the second year of Richard III.,* Duke Henry of Buckingham came from Brecknock to Weblie, and with him brought my lady his wife, my lord Stafford, and my lord Henry, and there tarried one week and sent for the gentlemen of the country unto him, and when he had spoken with them departed thence. My lord his father made him a frieze coat, and at his departing he delivered his son and heir to Sir Richard Delabeare, Knight, for to keep until he sent for him by a token, etc., viz., *et tu es Petrus et super hanc petram.* John Amyasse . . . delivered my lord Stafford in the little park of Weblie to Richard Delabeare, Knight, and then came after Sir William Knevet and Mistress Cliffe, and so they came to Kynnarsdley altogether. And when they came to Kynnarsdley there were 20 of my lord's servants in the place. At that time Dame Elizabeth Delabeare, being servant to Sir Richard Delabeare, Knight, took my lord Stafford on her lap, and bare him amongst and through them all into a chamber of the place of Kynnarsdley, and then went again and fetched Sir William Knevet and the gentlemen, and brought them into the chamber of my lord Stafford."

Before the Duke left Webley, Brecknock had been despoiled by the Vaughans. After reciting this, the memorial continues: "A proclamation came to Hereford for the said Duke, his son, and Sir William Knevet, that whosoever would take them he should have for the said Duke £4,000,† for my lord Stafford 1,000 marks, for my lord Henry £500, and for Sir William Knevet 500 marks, the which proclamation Sir William Knevet read himself and prayed that it should not miss but be proclaimed. And then was there great search made where the said company was become. And so all the gentlemen of Herefordshire were sent for by the Privy Seal to King Richard to Salisbury, and by that time duke Henry of Buckingham was brought by Sir James Tyler the third day, where he was piti-

* This is one of the numerous errors in regard to chronology characteristic of the times.

† The reward offered was £1,000 in money *or* £100 in land.

fully murdered by the said King for raising power to bring in King Henry VII. And after the said duke was taken the Vaughans made great search after my lord Stafford, and for the said Sir William Knevet, which were in the keeping of Dame Elizabeth Delabeare and William ap Symon. In the meantime she shaved the said Lord Stafford's head, and put upon him a maiden's raiment, and so conveyed him out of Kynnarsdley to Newchurch. And then came Christopher Wells, borne from Sir James Tyler to Kynnarsdley, and said his father commanded to have the said Lord Stafford delivered. Then answered the said Dame Elizabeth Delabeare and William ap Symon that there was none such lord there, 'and that ye shall well know for ye shall see the house searched.' And then went he to Webley to my lady, and there met with Sir John Harlestone's brother and fetched my lady of Buckingham and brought her to the King to London. And the said Dame Elizabeth and William ap Symon fetched the said lord again to Kynnarsdley and the said Sir William Knevet, and brought them into the place of Kynnarsdley and there kept them until David Glin Morgan came thither from King Richard and said Mr. Delabeare was arrested, and said there he should abide till he delivered Lord Stafford; and then said Dame Elizabeth and William ap Symon that ye shall well know there is none such here, and ye shall come and see the place and it please you, and so in great malice he departed thence. The night before that David Glin Morgan came to Kinnarsdley, the said Dame Elizabeth and William ap Symon conveyed my lord Stafford and Sir William Knevet to a place called Adeley in the parish of Kynnarsdley, and there rested they four days, and then the said Lord Stafford and Sir William Knevet were fetched again to Kynnarsdley by the said Dame Elizabeth and William ap Symon for because they could not convey meat and drink to them aright. They kept them there one sennight and then there came a great cry out of Wales, and then the said Dame Elizabeth took my Lord Stafford in her lap and went through a brook with him into the Park of Kynnarsdley, and there sat with him four hours until William ap Symon came to her and told her how the matter was that no man came nigh the place. In the meantime Sir William Knevet went out with one William Pantwall into the fields and left Mistress Oliffe in the place all this while. After that the Dame Elizabeth and William ap Symon took the said Lord Stafford and went to Hereford in the midst of

the day, and he riding behind William ap Symon aside upon a pillow like a gentlewoman, rode in gentlewoman's apparel and I think (wisse) he was the fairest gentlewoman and the best that ever she had in her days, or ever shall have, whom she prayeth God daily to preserve from his enemies, and to send him good fortune and grace. And then the said Dame Elizabeth and William ap Symon left my lord Stafford in a widow's house, a friend of hers at Hereford, and Mistress Oliffe with him, and at that time Sir William Knevet departed for my lord Stafford."—OWEN & BLAKEWAY'S *History of Shrewsbury*, pp. 241–2.

E. (Vol. ii., p. 67.)

THERE can be little doubt that the popular metrical romance of "The Babes in the Wood" comes to us from the days of Richard III. The modern phraseology of the ballad, in the earliest extant editions, is no indication that the original is of later date than the fifteenth century. Assuming it to be a disguised recital of the reputed murder of the Princes by Richard III., it is consistent with the practice of the Middle Ages that a story, which it would not have been safe to circulate in writing, should be handed down to posterity in rude versification, and only reduced to writing long after its original composition, when its phraseology would be misleading in regard to the date of its production. It almost admits of demonstration that both Shakspeare and Sir Thomas More were familiar with this popular legend in something very like its present form, and the date of its composition is probably not later than 1484. The subject is very ably discussed by Miss Halsted,* from whose interesting paper the following quotations will serve to indicate the remarkable and numerous coincidences between many expressions in the ballad and the version of historical incidents as recorded by More and Shakspeare.

The children are placed under the guardianship of their uncle,

> Whom wealth and riches did surround,
> A man of high estate.

He seeks to assuage the fears of their mother,

> Sweet sister, do not feare.

* "Life of Richard III.," vol. i., Appendix A.

So Shakspeare, "Richard III.," Act ii., Sc. 2.,

Sister, have comfort.

The descriptions of both dramatist and historian are recalled in the parting scene between the mother and her children:

With lippes as cold as any stone,
She kist her children small;
God bless you both, my children deare,
With that the tears did fall.

"And there withal she said unto the child, 'Farewell, my own swete son; God send you good keeping; let me kis you once yet ers you goe, for God knoweth when we shall kis together agayne.' And therewith she kissed him, and blessed him, turned her back and wept."—Sir THOMAS MORE'S *Richard III.*, p. 62.

Designedly disguised is the allusion to the hiring of the two ruffians to perpetrate the murder:

He bargained with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood;
That they should take these children young
And slay them—in a wood.

"To the execution whereof, he appointed Miles Forest, a fellow fleshed in murther beforetime; to him he joined one John Dighton, a big, brode, square, strong knave."—MORE'S *Richard III.*, p. 141.

Shakspeare's authority for the compunction felt by the two murderers is found here:

So that the pretty speeche they had,
Made murder's heart relent;
And they that took to do the deed
Full sore did now repent.

Dighton and Forest, whom I did suborn,
To do this piece of ruthless butchery,—
Albeit they were flesh'd villains, bloody dogs,—
Melting with tenderness and mild compassion,
Wept like two children in their death's sad story.
SHAKSPEARE'S *Richard III.*, Act iv., Sc. 3.

These are but a specimen of the numerous details in which the ballad is in agreement with the traditional history of the time. They go far to prove the political object of its composition. The

language, as Addison has observed, is mean, "and yet, because the sentiments appear genuine and unaffected, they are able to move the mind of the most polite reader with inward meltings of humanity and compassion." * Such was precisely the object contemplated, when, with some additional stanzas describing the judgment of heaven upon the murderers, the poem was first printed. The ballad, therefore, says Miss Halsted, in that mysterious form which was only necessary during Richard's lifetime, "became singularly effective both in strengthening the tradition which Henry desired to have believed, and, if followed up, in affording a happy medium for that monarch to circulate the facts of Tyrrel's alleged confession." Sung by itinerant minstrels, a ballad so damaging to Richard could not fail to reach the ears of his successor, or by him to be employed in the attempt, in which he failed after all, to fix the crime of the murder of Edward IV.'s children upon their uncle.

F. (Vol. ii., p. 197.)

THE SWEATING SICKNESS.

This distemper first appeared in England in 1483 on the landing of the Earl of Richmond's army at Milford Haven. Following the rear of Henry's army it spread from the mountains of Wales to the metropolis. It was a violent inflammatory rheumatic fever, attended with great disorder to the nervous system. It first affected some particular part, producing inward heat, unquenchable thirst, restlessness, sickness, headache, delirium, then faintness and excessive drowsiness. The pulse was quick and vehement, and the breath short and labouring.† After a short rigor it prostrated the powers as with a blow, suffusing the whole body with a fetid perspiration. All this took place in the course of a few hours, and the crisis was always over within the space of a day and night. Intolerable as was the internal heat produced, every refrigerant was certain death. The people were seized with consternation when they saw that scarcely one in a

* Addison's Works, vol. ii., p. 397.
† Dr. Friend's "History of Physick."

hundred escaped, and their first impression was that a reign commencing with such horrors must be destined to be inauspicious.

Very shortly after Henry's entry into the metropolis the Sweating Sickness began to spread its ravages amongst the densely-peopled streets of the city, where it raged from the 21st of September until November. Two Lord Mayors and six Aldermen were its victims within a single week, having scarcely laid aside their festive robes. Many who had been in perfect health at night were on the following morning numbered among the dead. The disease for the most part marked for its victims robust and vigorous men. Business was suspended, and universal gloom overspread the city. The coronation was of necessity postponed, and the disease spread from the west coast to the east, following in the wake of Henry's army from Milford Haven to Cardigan, Lichfield, and the eastern counties, spreading universal terror. Physicians could do little or nothing, and indeed they are not alluded to in any account of the epidemic.

There was no security against a second attack; many who had recovered were seized a second and sometimes a third time. The University of Oxford was closed, but though professors and students fled in all directions the scourge pursued them and many died. On the 14th of November the Prior of Croyland fell a victim. No resource was left to the terrified people but their own good sense, and this led them to a plan of treatment which medical science has since declared to have been the only rational one. It consisted simply in abstaining from violent medicines, from food, and sleep, and the application of a moderate heat to carry on the sweat, taking only a small quantity of mild drink and quietly waiting the crisis of the disease. But though many lives were saved by this prudent treatment the epidemic continued to rage until the end of the year. On the 1st of January, 1484, a violent tempest broke over the south-eastern counties, and, by purifying the atmosphere, relieved the oppression under which the people laboured, and thus, to the joy of the whole nation, the epidemic was swept away without leaving a trace behind. It returned, however, on five different occasions between 1485 and 1528, and with such virulence as frequently to prove fatal in the course of three hours.

As to the origin of the disease there is no room for doubt. It is not surprising that this was imperfectly recognised in a superstitious

age, but so late as the beginning of the present century the author, whose account of the epidemic I have substantially followed, writes: "It plainly appeared in the sequel that the English Sweating Sickness was *a spirit of the mist* which hovered amid the dark clouds." * The army of the Earl of Richmond consisted of wandering freebooters who had pillaged Normandy, and whom Charles VIII. gladly made over to Henry. Cooped up for a week in dirty ships, they doubtless carried about with them all the material for germinating the seeds of a pestilential disorder. Three years earlier France had been the scene of a devastating plague—an inflammatory fever attended with symptoms analogous to those of the Sweating Sickness. In 1484 similar virulent diseases spread through Germany and Switzerland. Brought hither by Henry's army, many predisposing causes favoured its propagation. A heavy rainfall during several successive years had produced a humidity affecting the functions of the lungs and the skin. A universal gloom overspread the country which, in the minds of the superstitious peasantry, was intensified by such natural phenomena as a fiery comet,† the Great Water at Bristol, the total eclipse of the sun on the day of Queen Anne's death, and the more remarkable lunar eclipse in October, 1483.‡ The fear of disaster and death gave an impulse to the malady for which the quality of the atmosphere had made preparation.

* "Epidemics of the Middle Ages," by J. F. C. Hecker, M.D., p. 187.
† Warkworth, p. 5. ‡ See vol. ii., p. 33.

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